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श्री भगवद्गीता

SRI BHAGAVAD GITA

अथ षष्ठोऽध्यायः

Atha Sashtodhyayah

THE SIXTH DISCOURSE

आत्मसंयमयोगः

ATMA SAMYAMA YOGAH

THE YOGA OF SELF - CONTROL

The title of the Discourse :

The title of the Discourse is *Atmasamyama yoga* – the *yoga* of self–control. It is also known as *Dhyana yoga* – the *yoga* of Meditation. Here the term *Atma* refers to the body, the senses, the mind and the intellect. The method of subduing these forces and bringing them under control is pointed out in this discourse and so it is entitled *Atmasamyama yoga.*

Important Points of the Discourse :

1. *Nishkama Karma,* and the attributes of the sage established in *yoga* – (1–4 Verses).
2. The characteristics of the sage of self - conquest – (5–10 Verses)
3. The method of meditation. (11–32 Verses).
4. Enquiry into mind–control. (32–36 Verses).
5. The excellence of *Dhyana yoga* and the furture of the aspirant who fails to reach the ultimate goal in the life. (37–47 Verses).

How this Discourse is connected with the previous one :

At the beginning of the Fifth Discourse, in answer to Arjuna's question, the Lord stated that both *Jnana* and *Karma* are high forms of spiritual discipline. But it was pointed out that in the early stages, *Karmayoga* is superior. Having examined the two paths, the Lord mentioned that meditation (*Dhyana*) is helpful to the aspirant. In this Discourse, the process of meditation is explained in all its details. The Discourse begins with a reference to *Karma Yoga.*

श्री भगवानुवाच

1. अनाश्रितः कर्मफलं कार्यं कर्म करोति यः ।
स संन्यासी च योगी च न निरग्निर्न चाक्रियः ॥ १

Sri Bhagavan uvacha

Anasritah karma phalam karyam karma karoti yah ।
sa samnyasi cha yogi cha na niragnir na cha 'kriyah ॥ 1

श्री भगवानुवाच–*Sri Bhagavanuvacha :* The Blessed Lord said.

Meaning : यः *yah :* who, कर्मफलम् *karmaphalam :* fruits of work, अनाश्रितः *anasritah :* not depending on, कार्यम् *karyam:* prescribed by the Sastras, कर्म *karma :* duty, करोति *karoti :* perform, सः *sah :* he, संन्यासी च *sannyasi cha :* (is) ascetic and, योगीच *yogicha :* also yogi, निरग्निः *niragnih :* one who has given up the worship of Fire, न *na :* not, अक्रियः च *akriyah cha :* one who is also inactive, न *na :* not.

Substance : He who performs the prescribed duty without depending on the fruits of work is a *sannyasi* and a *yogi*, and not he who gives up the worship of Fire and who remains without action.

Commentary : Some people think that one who wears the ochre robes is a *sannyasi.* Others think that one who lives in solitude in a mountain cave, having given up all work is a *yogi.*

These are external things only. No one can claim to be a *sannyasi* or *yogi* by these external conditions. The inner impurities of the mind should be cleared, attachment should be given up, desire for enjoyment should be relinquished. Inner purification comes first, and then only external renunciation. It is only then that one may rightly be recognised as a *Sannyasi* or *Yogi.*

The real attributes of a perfected sage are performance of prescribed duties and action without desire for the fruits of work.

Freedom from attachment of any kind is the sine quo non of a *sannyasi.* Desireless performance of good work is the mark of a *yogi.* The Lord emphatically condemns the idlers and pretenders who are neither useful citizens nor enlightened guides of the community.

Duty prescribed by the Sastras : Action is here qualified by the condition that it should confirm to the laws of *Dharma.* What is contrary to *Dharma* is not advisable (*Karyam*). Righteous deeds and these also performed without desire to enjoy the fruits, is the law of Action. Any one who acts according to this law is indeed a *sannyasi* and he attains the highest reward of liberation.

The difference in caste or *Asrama* is not mentioned here. The fulfilment of the conditions of *Dharma*, and non-attachment are the only characteristics of *sannyasa* or *yoga.*

Question : *Who is a sannyasi and yogi ?*

Answer : He who performs his prescribed duties without attachment is a *sannyasi* and a *yogi*, and not he who gives up the sacrificial Fire and leads an idle life of inaction.

The principle behind Sannyasa and Yoga is the same.

2. यं संन्यासमिति प्राहुर्योगं तं विद्धि पाण्डव ।
न ह्यसंन्यस्तसङ्कल्पो योगी भवति कश्चन ॥ २

Yam samnyasamiti prahur yogam tam viddhi pandava ।
na hyasamnyastasamkalpo yogi bhavati kaschana ॥ 2

Meaning : पाण्डव *Pandava* : O Arjuna ! यम् *yam* : which, सन्यासम् इति *sannyasam iti* : as sannayasa, प्राहुः *prahuh* : is called, तम् *tam* : that, योगम् *yogam* (*iti*) : as yoga, विद्धि हि *viddhi hi* : know verily, असन्यस्तसंकल्पः *asannyastasamkalpah* : who does not give up desire, कश्चन *kaschana* : any one, योगी *yogi* : yogi, न भवति *na bhavati* : does not become.

Substance : O Arjuna ! That which is called *sannyasa,* know that to be *yoga* also; no one who has not given up desire can ever become a *yogi.*

Commentary : By sharp discrimination between the Self and non-Self, the *Jnanayogi* rejects *anatma* (non-self) and establishes himself in the Supreme Reality. The *Karma yogi* acts without any feeling of doership, without desire, without the sense of 'I' and 'Mine', and surrenders his work with its fruits to God. So acting he lives in the Supreme Reality. The *Jnanayogi* follows the path of introspection into himself by eliminating the senses the mind and the external world. The *Bhaktiyogi* has no relish for anything in the world, and he contemplates the Lord repeating His name, singing His glories, and thus lives in bliss and blessedness. In this way whatever path man may follow – *Jnana, Karma, Bhakti, Dhyana* – the inner principle is the same (i. e.) the rejection of insentient material things. Besides this, life in the Divine is implicit in all these *yogas.* That is why the Lord teaches that *sannyasa* and *yoga* are the same in their goal and aim. No one who has not renounced desire, the ego-centric initiative (*samkalpa*) for possessing material things, can ever become a *yogi.* Without the renunciation of desire, to live an idle and aimless life is neither *sannyasa* nor *yoga.*

Question : *Are sannyasa and yoga different ?*

Answer : No. What is called *sannyasa* is the same as *yoga.*

Question : *When does a man become a yogi ?*

Answer : Only when he gives up desire and attachment does he become a *Yogi.*

In the initial stages of sadhana Karma (action) is necessary.

3. आरुरुक्षोर्मुनेर्योगं कर्म कारणमुच्यते ।
योगारूढस्य तस्यैव शमः कारणमुच्यते ॥ ३

Arurukshor muner yogam karma karanam uchyate ।
yogarudhasya tasyai'va samah karanam uchyate ॥ 3

Meaning : योगम् *yogam :* to yoga (union with the Self), आरुरुक्षोः *arurukshah :* aspiring to ascend, मुनेः *muneh :* of the sage, कर्म *karma :* action, कारणम् *karanam :* means, उच्यते *uchyate :* is called, योगारूढस्य *yogarudhasya :* enthroned in yoga, तस्य एव *tasya eva :* even for the same sage, शमः *samah :* quiescence, serenity, कारणम् *karnam :* means, उच्यते *uchyate :* is said.

Substance : For the sage aspiring to ascend to *yoga*, action is said to be the means; and for the same sage enthroned in *yoga* serenity is called the means.

Commentary : To achieve success in *Jnanayoga* or *Dhyana yoga*, action (*Nishkamakarma*) is said to be the means. When success is attained in *yoga* and the mind approaches steadiness in the Self, a quiescent state free from action (*sama*) is said to be the means for deeper union with the Self. Therefore in the early stages of meditation purity has to be acquired by the practice of *Nishkama karma.* Afterwards, as the mind becomes firm and steady by its purity, action should be gradually reduced. It means that as the aspirant approaches the Self nearer and nearer, action drops off of its own accord, even as dry leaves fall from the tree. The field of activity is thus transferred from the external world to the inner realm of the human personality. Hearing of *Atma*, thinking of *Atma*, meditating on *Atma*

(*sravana, manana, nidhidhyasa*) - the seeker is disinclined to come out of the inner pursuit to active functions of the outer world with the body and the senses. He finds supreme satisfaction in being absorbed in the Self. The turbulence of the bodily organs and the senses is quelled. The seeker has no use for them, because the mind and the intellect are turned within and the ascent towards the Self is maintained steadily. Such quietude of the physical and mental mechanism will enable him ultimately to reach the state where there are no thought-modifications, and the Self is direclty realised.

Let the seekers understand the position correctly. Hasty attempts to go into meditation will be of no avail. The mind rarely falls quiet for the common man. The inherent '*vasanas*' pull him out into the external world of action. It requires great effort to purify the mind before it can attain a calm and peaceful state when meditation becomes possible. So the seeker should first engage himself in righteous and devotional acts. Otherwise, he remains dull and inactive, and dullness of brain is certainly not meditation. Meditation is an intensely active state when all the energies of man are gathered together and centred in the one thought of the Self. To stop action by force and drive the mind by violent effort would unhinge the personality and render it more restless and distracted. When the wound is healing, a layer of skin covers it, but if one scratches it away before the wound is completely cured, it causes another blister. The layer should drop off naturally. So also, all actions are reduced by a natural process when the mind gathers momentum in its inward pursuit of the Self.

The path of progress may be divided into three stages : (1) The aspirant who is seeking for *yoga* comes under the first stage – (the High - School Course). (2) The second stage is reached when meditation becomes possible by the purity of mind (Graduate Course). (3) Undisturbed absorption in the Self is the final stage (Post-Graduate Course). So the progress is gradual, not sudden and violent. First through *Nishkamakarma* the mind should be purified. Then the practice of meditation should start. Then meditation should become deeper and

deeper till the Self is realised. As a man reaches the third stage, all actions appear burdensome, and his only aim would be to get firmly established in the Self. He is the '*Yogarudha*'.

The attributes of the Yogarudha are mentioned.

4. यदा हि नेन्द्रियार्थेषु न कर्मस्वनुषज्जते ।
सर्वसङ्कल्पसंन्यासी योगारूढस्तदोच्यते ॥ ४

Yada hi ne'ndriyartheshu na karmasv anusajjate ।
sarvasamkalpasamnyasi yogarudhastado'chyate ॥ 4

Meaning : यदाहि *yada hi :* when verily, इन्द्रियार्थेषु *indriyartheshu :* in sense-objects, नानुषज्जते *na anusajjate :* not attached, कर्मसु *karmasu :* in actions, न *na:* not, सर्वसंकल्पसंन्यासी *sarvasamkalpasannyasi :* the renouncer of all thoughts, तदा *tada :* then, योगारूढः *yogarudhah :* one who is enthroned in yoga, उच्यते *uchyate :* is called.

Substance : When the sage feels no attachment for sense-objects and actions, renouncing the ego-centric will (*samkalpa*) then he is said to be enthroned in *yoga*.

Commentary : The words '*yada*' and '*tada*' are used to point out the exact moment when a sage is called a '*Yogarudha*' Three conditions are to be fulfilled—

1. Non-attachment to sense-objects.
2. Non-attachment to actions.
3. Renunciation of all thoughts.

So long as the mind is attached to sense-objects, it runs outwards for the enjoyment of worldly pleasures. When the mind does not turn inwards, meditation is not possible. When dispassion develops, the outgoing tendency of the mind stops, and then it can easily be trained to look for the Self within. *Nishkamakarma* develops dispassion.

When the mind finds happiness in *Atma*, man looses all pleasure in action. Moreover as the mind is detached from the

senses no action can take place, because contact with the external world is possible only through the senses. Actionlessness occurs in the higher stages of *Sadhana*. Some great sages who have passed beyond all relative thoughts, and are established in perfect *Yoga*, come down from that supreme state to act in the world for the good of humanity.

Renunciation of the ego-centric will is the third attribute of the *Yogarudha*. First of all bad thoughts should be replaced by good thoughts and then all thoughts should be given up. When there are no thoughts, the sage is enthroned in *Yoga*, union with the Self. The common man should complete the preliminary education of the mind to give up impure and sinful thought. Noble ideals, good aims, useful activity, selfless work-all these should be assiduously cultivated. There is no otherway to purify the mind. The study of the *Sastras*, company of holy men, association with good people, are helpful to strengthen the good and eliminate the evil. Divine and devotional thoughts and feelings should become natural to the mind.

Afterwards when the mind, through intense meditation, reaches the Self and tastes the infinite bliss, good thoughts also come to an end. When the mind, merges in *Atma*, *Atma* alone exists. This is the thought-free state of the *Yogarudha*. It is not emptiness or nothingness, because in the thought-free state, the all-pervading knowledge consciousness is fully awake though there is no mind. Some great sages who come down to the relative plane of the mind work for the good of mankind.

Question : *What are the attributes of a Yogarudha ?*

Answer : Non-attachment to sense-objects and actions, renunciation of all thoughts are the attributes of a *Yogarudha*

To reach the state of Yogarudha, each man has to lift himself up by his own self-effort.

5. उद्धरेदात्मनात्मानं नात्मानमवसादयेत् ।
आत्मैव ह्यात्मनो बन्धुरात्मैव रिपुरात्मनः ॥ ५

Uddharedatmana 'tmanam na 'tmanam avasadayet |
atmai 'va hy atmano bandhura mai 'va ripuratmanah || 5

Meaning : आत्मना *atman* : by the Self, आत्मानं *atmanam* : the Self, उद्धरेत् *uddharet* : let (him) raise, आत्मानं *atmanam* : the Self, न अवसादयेत् *na avasadayet* : not let go down, हि *hi* : because, आत्मनः *atmanah* : to oneself, आत्मा एव *atma eva* : self only, बन्धुः *bandhuh* : friend, आत्मनः *atmanah* : to oneself. आत्मा एव *Atma eva* : self only, रिपुः *ripuh* : foe.

Substance : Let one raise the self by the self and not let the self go down, for the self is the friend of the self and the self is the foe of the self.

Commentary : The Lord declares that each individual should lift himself up by his own effort. The *Sastras* and the *Guru* point the way. Each one has to tread the path himself. He has to see with his own eyes, walk with his own legs, satisfy his hunger by feeding himself. Man is the architect of his own destiny, the pilot of his own fate. God helps those who help themselves. To think that God would take the people to the land of peace while they live a life of idleness and sensuality is utterly wrong. So also, no teacher however great he might be can take a person to freedom if he does not show grace to himself. They cannot give a passport to immortality if he does not strive to purify himself and live the life of godliness. One has to pay the price even for a small article in the market. Thus we can imagine what price a man has to pay to obtain eternal joy and peace. Will idleness purchase this immortal blessing? How much effort, struggle, striving is needed to attain freedom? So let each man work diligently by carrying out the instructions of the *Sastras* and the *Guru*. Finally it is the self that realises the Self. The Lord makes it clear to all seekers that they should not expect any sudden transformation from one state to another by any sort of miracle or jugglery. It is a hard struggle from first to last. One should be prepared for it if he wants the highest reward of life.

When one sees a *Mahatma* he wishes to be like him untouched by any woe, beyond all trouble and turmoil. But let

us understand how he reached that state, what intense 'tapas' he did, what rigours of discipline he underwent, what devotion and dispassion he practiced, how long and hard he fought the battle against the inner enemies of lust and greed, and how finally he attained the position of the *Jivanmukta*. The effort was done all by the man himself with the grace of God and *Guru*. Maharshi Vasishta tells Sri Rama that the *Guru's* teaching to the disciple is a *Vedic* tradition only. All the actual work is to be done by oneself. The sick man should take the medicine himself if he should be cured. No one else can swallow the medicine and bring him relief. The fitful fever of life in which a man lives in a delirious state is to be overcome by personal knowledge and austerity.

The Lord gives the warning that man should not degrade himself. 'Do not let yourself go down' is the Lord's command. Ascent is difficult, discent is easy. Whenever the lower instincts are provoked, man discends to the level of the beast. Reason and rational judgment seems to be powerless before the raging passions of animality. And yet, there is no man who does not believe that he is made for nobler and higher things than to live and die like a beast. It is this inner urge that should be kept up, strengthened, and brought to the foreground of man's consci-ousness. The aspiration to rise to a higher plane should turn bright in the heart of man. And then begins the ascent.

The human mind is a battlefield of conflicting forces-good (*Dharma*) and evil (*Adharma*). The mind is thus split into two hostile camps. With diligent perseverence man should hold on to *Dharma*. The mind should be saturated with noble aims and ideals. The lives of great men should be read and one should identify himself with their noble achievements. The good in man is thus vitalised, and the evil gradually loses its mental grip over him. That is why the Lord here says that the mind is both a friend and foe. The impure mind is the foe, and the pure mind is the friend. The mind is but a series of thoughts coming and going like the waves of the ocean. The mind is good when a good thought comes, it is evil when a bad thought comes. So one should generate as many good thoughts as possible

continuously and cling to them at all costs. *Japa* is nothing but holding to a spiritual idea. Study of the *Sastras* and holy works create an atmosphere of purity. These are all aids to suppress the evil and neutralise its venom.

The Lord throws the whole responsibility on oneself for his salvation or domination. "Ascend, do not go down, your fate is in your own hands, strive and succeed." This is the Lord's inspiring call to mankind.

Question : *Who can save man from Samsara ?*

Answer : Man should save himself. He should not go down like a rubber ball dropped on a staircase.

Question : *Who is the friend and foe of man ?*

Answer : His own mind is the friend as well as the foe. A pure mind is a friend. An impure mind is a foe.

6. बन्धुरात्मात्मनस्तस्य येनात्मैवात्मना जितः ।
अनात्मनस्तु शत्रुत्वे वर्तेतात्मैव शत्रुवत् ॥ ६

Bandhuratma 'tmanas tasya yena 'tmai 'va 'tmana jithah ।
anatmanastu satrutve varteta 'tmai 'va satruvat ॥ 6

Meaning : येन *yena :* by whom, आत्मना एव *atmana eva :* by the self only, आत्मा *atma :* mind, जितः *jitah :* (is) conquered, तस्य *tasya :* his, आत्मा *atma :* mind, आत्मनः *atmanah :* to him, बन्धुः *bandhuh :* (is) friend, अनात्मनस्तु *anatmanastu :* but to him who has not conquered the mind, आत्मा *atma :* mind, शत्रुवत् *satruvat :* like an enemy, शत्रुत्वे एव *satrutve eva:* In the place of an enemy only, वर्तेत *varteta :* acts.

Substance : His mind is a friend whose mind is conquered by the self, but to him who has not conquered the mind, the mind itself acts like an enemy in harmful ways.

Commentary : The same idea as in the previous verse is elaborated here. Friend and foe are both inside man. The

subdued mind is a friend, and the turbulant mind is the enemy. External friend or enemies are not so loyal or persistent as the conquered mind. The mind subdued and kept under control is the greatest friend to lead one to eternal peace. Even so, the turbulent mind poisoned with lust and greed leads to destruction. So control of mind is essential for spiritual progress.

The word *Atma* in this context refers to the mind including the senses and the bodily organs.

Mind conquered by the self : Man has to conquer the lower self by the higher self.

Question : *Who is a friend ?*

Answer : The subdued mind is a friend unto oneself.

Question : *Who is a foe ?*

Answer : The turbulant mind is a foe unto oneself.

The reward of self-subdual is declared.

7. जितात्मनः प्रशान्तस्य परमात्मा समाहितः ।
शीतोष्णसुखदुःखेषु तथा मानावमानयोः ॥ ७

Jitatmanah prasantasya paramatma samahitah ।
sitoshnasukhaduhkheshu tatha manavamanayoh ॥ 7

Meaning : जितात्मनः *jitatmanah :* of him who has subdued the mind, प्रशान्तस्य *prasantasya :* of the peaceful man, शीतोष्णसुखदुःखेषु *sitoshnasukhadukheshu :* in heat and cold, pleasure and pain, तथा *tatha :* similarly, मानावमानयोः *manava–manayoh :* in honour and disgrace, परमात्मा *paramatma :* the Supreme Self, समाहितः *samahitah :* is experienced.

Substance : The man who has subdued the mind and is full of peace experiences the Supreme Self under all conditions in heat and cold, pleasure and pain, honour and dishonour. (The mind of such a man experiences the Self under all conditions).

Commentary : The ill-regulated mind of the common man is upset by the pains of opposites, heat and cold, pleasure and pain, honour and disgrace. Proud in the hour of praise, sullen in the hour of shame, elated in the hour of pleasure, depressed in the hour of pain, the mind goes through a constant wheel of different moods and passions. Every moment of life causes a peculiar change in the mind. The ignorant man lives and dies under the sway of the turbulent and disturbed mind. He is never peaceful. Peace is the result of a restful state of mind. When the mind is in a state of restless ecstasy, there can be no taste of peace at all. But the mind of the sage is different. It is always in a state of balance, whatever changes may be happening outside, and rests in the infinite peace of *Atma*. As little waves and ripples of wind cannot shake a huge mountain, the pairs of opposites cannot move the man who has subdued the mind. He is always established in the Self and enjoys the bliss of Self. So by constant practice, the seeker has to keep the mind in a condition of immovable stability.

Question : *Who is it that remains unmoved by the pairs of opposites ?*

Answer : The sage who has conquered the mind is not affected by the pairs of opposites. His mind rests peacefully in the Self.

The attributes of the sage who rests in the Self are mentioned.

8. ज्ञानविज्ञानतृप्तात्मा कूटस्थो विजितेन्द्रियः ।
युक्त इत्युच्यते योगी समलोष्टाश्मकाञ्चनः ॥ ८

Jnana vijnana triptatma kutastho vijitendriyah ।
yukta ityuchyate yogi sama loshtasma kanchanah ॥ 8

Meaning : ज्ञानविज्ञानतृप्तात्मा *jnanavijnanatriptatma* : One who is satisfied with the Knowledge of the Sastras and experience of Self, कूटस्थः *kutasthah* : unshaken, immovable, विजितेन्द्रियः *vijitendriyah* : one who has conqeured the senses, समलोष्टाश्मकाञ्चनः *samaloshtasmakanchanah* : who looks equally

on mud, stone and gold, योगी *yogi* : (such) yogi, युक्तः *yuktah* : harmonised in yoga, इति *iti* : thus, उच्यते *uchate* : is said.

Substance : The *yogi* who is satisfied with the knowledge of the *Sastras* and experience of the Self, who is immovable who has conquered the senses, who looks with an equal eye on mud, stone and gold, is said to be united or harmonised in *yoga*.

Commentary : *Yoga* means union of the self with *Paramatma*. The path leading to this union is also *yoga*. The man who strives for *yoga* is a *yogi*. Though there are several *yogas*, yet very rarely we come across a *yogi* of the highest realisation. The attributes of the perfected *Yogi* are mentioned here.

One who is satisfied with Jnana and Vignana : *Jnana* and *Vignana* are mentioned separately in the *Gita*. *Jnana* is understanding of the Self by the study of the *Sastras*, the teachings of the *Guru* and elders. *Vijnana* means direct Self-realisation. It is just the difference between theory and practice. One may study the art of cooking from books, but this knowledge is not complete without practical experience. One should clearly understand the difference between the two. The scholar may imagine that he has attained self-reasliation by his knowledge of the *Sastras*. No doubt the value of intellectual knowledge of Truth should not be under-estimated. But this should never be mistaken for Realisation. Realisation requires an absolute subdual of the senses, the mind, and the intellect, the elimination of all desires, and perfect peace in the Self. The words '*triptah*', '*tushtah*' are used to show that the realised *yogi* is perfectly contented in the Self. Wealth and enjoyments, fame and name, power and position, do not lead to this undisturbed contentment in the Self. Everybody knows it. There is still a feeling of incompleteness. Having attained the Self, man knows that he has nothing else to seek for. He is contended forever and ever.

Unshaken : The *yogi* remains unshaken and immovable when he rests in the Self. '*Kuta*' means the iron block used by the jeweler to shape the ornaments. Just as the iron block remains unshaken when the jeweler uses the chisel to shape

the jewels, so also the *yogi* remains unshaken and unaffected by the changes that take place in the external life. There is no change in him, because he is resting in the Self, and the Self is immovable and eternal. The word '*Kutasthah*' may also be taken to refer to the Self (*Kutastho akshara uchyate*). So the *Yogarudha* is one who has attained unity with the Self.

One who has conquered the senses : Self-control is mentioned many times as the most important discipline in spiritual life. The *Yogarudha* is one who has thoroughly conquered the senses.

Who looks equally on mud, stone and gold : The *Yogarudha* looks with an equal eye, on mud, stone and gold. He sees no difference between them. How ? He knows that all natural objects-trees, rocks, the sun and stars, the clouds and rain, the body etc. – are only a combination of the five elements in varying proportions. So these objects do not appear to be different for him, in the same way as different jewels do not appear different for the gold-merchant who weighs and values the gold only minus the name and form. So these objects do not make any difference for the men of Self-realisation. They are the same to him because he sees only the spiritual substratum in all of them. So his vision is equal and balanced.

It is the mind that gives value to things. Gold is symbolic of all precious things in the world. That which is rare acquires greater value. That which is common pays less value. All this differrence is caused by the mind which attributes relative value to things. The *Yogarudha* who has seen the one substance out of which all these are made finds no distinction between them. It is all infinite ocean of *Sachithananda*. What is great and what is small ? There is no special value to anything because the background for all is only the Self. If in a dream one is a King and another is a begger, what difference does it make to the awakened man ?

For the man of self-realisation, clay and gold are equal. One who has such experience of the Self cannot see any distinction between the two.

Question : *What are the attributes of a Yogarudha ?*

Answer : Knowledge of the *Sastras*, experience of the Self, perfect contentment, immovable firmness in *Yoga*, conquest of the senses, equal vision, – these are the attributes of the *Yogarudha*.

The equal vision of the Yogarudha is further explained.

9. सुहृन्मित्रार्युदासीन मध्यस्थद्वेष्यबन्धुषु ।
साधुष्वपि च पापेषु समबुद्धिर्विशिष्यते ॥ ९

Suhrin mitraryudasina madhyastha dveshya bandhushu ।
sadhushv api cha papeshu samabuddhir visishyate ॥ 9

Meaning : सुहृन्मित्रार्युदासीनमध्यस्थद्वेष्यबन्धुषु *suhrinmitraryudasina madhyasthadveshyabandhushu* : in the good-hearted, in friends in foes, in the indifferent, in neutrals, in haters, and in relations, साधुषु अपि *sadhushu api* : in the righteous also, पापेषु च *papeshu cha* : and in the wicked, समबुद्धिः *samabuddhih* : one who has equal mind, विशिष्यते *visishyate* : excels.

Substance : He who is equal-minded towards the good-hearted, friends, enemies, the indifferent, neutrals, haters, relations, towards the righteous and also the wicked, excels.

Commentary : Different categories of men are described here. Some people help without expecting any return, others do so for mutual benefit. There are positively enemical people who may hate others and try to injure them in every possible way. Others are indifferent, and some others are neutral. Thus we come across different categories of people with different attitudes. The *Yogi* is equal-minded towards all these people. Towards the righteous and the unrighteous also he is equal-minded.

How is he able to maintain this equality of vision ? It is clear that all these distinctions arise with reference to the ego which has identified itself with the body. The ego-centric man is constantly reactionery to people according to their attitude

towards him. If they are friends, he likes them. If they are harmful foes, he hates them. It is the bodily outlook (*dehadrishti*) that is the cause of all those distinctions. For the man who has transcended the ego-idea, all that exists is only the Self and nothing else. He has realised the Self and he looks upon every thing with '*Atmic bhava*'. It is the duty of all seekers to cultivate the '*Atma-drishti*' in all things and kill the differentiation.

Question : *Who among the yogis excels* ?

Answer : The *yogi* who is equal-minded towards friend and foe, the good and the bad, excels.

Dhyanayoga by which union with the Self is attained is explained from this verse.

10. योगी युञ्जीत सततमात्मानं रहसि स्थितः ।
एकाकी यतचित्तात्मा निराशीरपरिग्रहः ॥ १०

Yogi yunjita satatam atmanam rahasi sthitah ।
ekaki yatachittatma nirasir uparigrahah ॥ 10

Meaning : योगी *yogi* : the yogi, रहसि *rahasi* : in a solitary place, स्थितः *sthitah* : stationed, एकाकी *ekaki* : alone, यतचित्तात्मा *yatachittatma* : self-controlled, निराशीः *nirasih* : without desire, अपरिग्रहः *aparigrahah* : without receiving any thing from others, सततम् *satatam* : always, आत्मानम् *atmanam*: the mind, युञ्जीत *yunjita* : should unite or merge in Atma.

Substance : Alone, stationed in a solitary place, self-controlled, free from desire and not receiving anything from others, the *yogi* (*Practising Dhyanayoga*) should unite the mind with *Atma*.

Commentary : From this verse onwards, the practice of *Dhyanayoga* is explained in detail. Here the word '*Yogi*' does not refer to one who has already attained perfection. It applies to those only who are seeking *yoga* (union with the Self). Five conditions are mentioned for the practice of *Dhyanayoga*— (1) Solitude, (2) Living in a lonely place, (3) Control of mind and body, (4) Desirelessness, (5) Non-receiving.

Stationed in a Solitary place : The *yogi* should practise meditation in a lonely place. Pretenders who sit in *yogic* pose in public thoroughfares are cheats and beggars. The *yogi* practises meditation not to derive benefit or admiration from others. The aim of the *yogi* is to establish union between himself and God. So he should seek a solitary place where the mind is not distracted by the sights and sounds of worldly life. That is why the ancient sages sought for the solitude of mountain-caves and river-beds, to carry on their spiritual practice. The solitude of nature is itself a purifying influence, and the vast silence around induces the mood of meditation without much effort. The beauty of nature delights and calms the mind, and the turbulent impulses are subdued of their own accord. The house-holders can create solitude in their own homes by keeping a small enclosure for purposes of worship and *dhyana*. The images of saints and sages along with the Deity of family worship may be kept there and worshipped with flowers, incense and camphor. Such a place will indeed be solitude. This is a liberal interpretation to undertake the practice of *Dhyana* for self-advancement.

Alone : Meditation has to be practised alone and not in the company of others. In *Bhakti Yoga* 'samkirtan' and 'bhajan' could be carried with greater intensity by groups of like-minded devotees. Not so in *Dhyana Yoga*. Even the proximity of another is a disturbing factor. So in *Dhyana Yoga* the aspirant has to remain alone with his mind in communion with the Self.

Control of mind and desirelessness are again emphasised. The aspirant should not receive anything from others. If anything is offered for the bare maintainance of the body, it may be taken. Beyond this, nothing should be touched. If gifts are received, the mind begins to dwell on them, and '*Dhyana*' is thereby disturbed. Non-receiving of gifts is one of the basic virtues in spiritual life. So *dhyana* requires complete absorption of the whole self in the Supreme Being without any kind of disturbance or distraction. *Dhyana* should be continuous and unbroken. Therefore the word '*satatam*' is used here. There is no fear for the man who is ever wakeful and vigilent in

spiritual life. The hostile forces (*tamas and rajas*) cannot enter the mind when it keeps continuous vigilence. When the light is kept burning always, there is no fear of darkness.

Question : *What are the conditions for the practice of Dhyana Yoga ?*

Answer : The *Yogi* should live in solitude. He should be all alone. He should control the mind and body. He should not have any desire. He should not receive any gifts from others.

Question : *Following these conditions, what should the Yogi do ?*

Answer : He should merge his mind in *Atma.*

Further instructions regarding the practice of Dhyana Yoga are given.

11. शुचौ देशे प्रतिष्ठाप्य स्थिरमासनमात्मनः ।
नात्युच्छ्रितं नातिनीचं चैलाजिनकुशोत्तरम् ॥ ११

12. तत्रैकाग्रं मनः कृत्वा यतचित्तेन्द्रियक्रियः ।
उपविश्यासने युञ्ज्याद्योगमात्मविशुद्धये ॥ १२

Suchau dese pratisthapya sthiram asanam atmanah ।
na 'tyucchritam na 'tinicham chailajinakusottaram ॥ 11
Tatrai 'kagram manah kritva yatachittendriyakriyah ।
upavisya'sane yunjyad yogam atmavisuddhaye ॥ 12

Meaning : शुचौ देशे *suchau dese* : in a clean spot, नात्युच्छ्रितम् *natyucchritam* : not very high, नातिनीचम् *natinicham:* not very low, चैलाजिनकुशोत्तरम् *chelajinakusottaram:* a cloth, skin (deer's or tiger's) and holy grass one over the other, स्थिरम् *sthiram* : firm, आसनम् *asanam* : seat, आत्मनः *atmanah* : his own, प्रतिष्ठाप्य *pratishthapya* : having established, तत्र आसने *tatra asane* : there on the seat, उपविश्य *upavisya* : being seated, मनः *manah* : the mind, एकाग्रम् *akagram* : one pointed, कृत्वा *kritva* : having made, यतचित्तेन्द्रियक्रियः *yatachittendriya kriyah* : controlling the activities of the mind and the senses,

आत्मविशुद्धये *atmavisuddhaye* : for self-purification, योगम् *yogam:* yoga (Dhyana), युञ्ज्यात् *yunjyat* : let him practice.

Substance : In a clean spot, a firm seat should be made, neither too high nor too low, and it should be covered by cloth, skin, and holy grass one over the other.

There, being seated, having made the mind one-pointed, controlling the actions of the mind and the senses, let him practice *Dhyana Yoga* for self-purification.

Commentary : The *Gita* gives complete instruction in all matters great and small. Here the Lord gives minute details of the place and the seat where *Dhyana* should be practised.

The place selected should be a clean spot. Keep the home clean and that shall become a fit place for meditation. Even in solitude, there may be unclean spots full of worms, germs and foul smell. Such a place is not fit for meditation. Let us understand how the Lord emphasises cleanliness. Some people think that the mind is more important than the place, and it does not matter whether the place is clean or not. It is wrong to think so. In an unclean place, unclean thoughts arise in the mind. In a home which is kept in perfect order, the mind functions in an orderly manner. Of course, when the man becomes a *yogarudha*, all places are the same. He can be absorbed in the Self at all places. But till that state is reached one must see that he selects only a clean spot. We do not come across any great soul living an unclean life either in body or mind, or speech.

The seat should not be too high or too low. If it is too high, there is the danger of falling down if at anytime the man becomes unconscious in the course of meditation. If it is too low, worms and other reptiles may sting the body, causing distraction. So, to sit on a wooden plank slightly raised from the ground is best. It should be covered with cloth, skin, and Kusha-grass one above the other. On the whole, the seat should be clean, firm, and levelled. It is only when the track

is firm and levelled the engine runs safely and smoothly. No particular '*asana*' is mentioned here. Each one may adopt his own *asana* - like *Padmasana* or *Siddhasana* - in which he can sit for a long time without feeling any **discomfort**. Only it should be firm (*sthiram*). Patanjali also says that the posture should be firm and comfortable (*Sthira sukha masanam*).

Being thus seated in any comfortable posture, the *yogi* should draw back the mind from the senses and the external world, and turn it inside to look into the Self. Mind acquires great power by such concentration on the Supreme Self and all forms of ignorance are burnt thereby.

This practice is intended to purify the inner organ, namely the mind.

Question : *What are the conditions prescribed for Dhyana Yoga?*

Answer : (1) One should select a clean spot. The place should be perfectly clean.

(2) The seat should not be too high or too low.

(3) The seat should be covered by holy grass, skin and cloth one over the other.

(4) The seat should be firm, smooth and levelled.

(5) He can adopt a comfortable posture which he can maintain for a sufficiently long time.

(6) He should control the functions of the senses and the mind.

(7) He should concentrate on the Self.

Question : *What is the effect of this practice?*

Answer : The mind is purified. It is in a pure mind that the Self is reflected.

Further instructions about Dhyana Yoga are given.

13. समं कायशिरोग्रीवं धारयन्नचलं स्थिरः ।
संप्रेक्ष्य नासिकाग्रं स्वं दिशश्चानवलोकयन् ॥ १३

14. प्रशान्तात्मा विगतभीर्ब्रह्मचारिव्रते स्थितः ।
मनः संयम्य मच्चित्तो युक्त आसीत मत्परः ॥ १४

Samam kayasirogrivam dharayannachalam sthirah ।
samprekshya nasikagram svam disas cha 'navalokayan ॥ 13

Prasantatma vigatabhir brahmacharivrate sthitah ।
manah samyamya macchitto yukta asita matparah ॥ 14

Meaning : कायशिरोग्रीवम् *kayasirogrivam* : body, head and neck, समम् *samam* : erect, अचलम् *achalam* : motionless, धारयन् *dharayan* : holding, स्थिरः *sthirah* : immovable, दिशः च *disascha* : and sides, अनवलोकयन् *anavalokayan* : not looking, स्वं नासिकाग्रम् *svam nasikagran* : tip of his nose, संप्रेक्ष्य *samprekshya* : gazing on, प्रशान्तात्मा *prasantatma* : peaceful, विगतभीः *vigatabhih* : fearless, ब्रह्मचारिव्रते *brahmacharivrate* : in the vow of celebacy, स्थितः *sthitah* : established, मनः *manah* : mind, संयम्य *samyama* : having controlled, मच्चित्तः *macchittah* : Me in mind, मत्परः *matparah* : Me as the goal, युक्तः *yuktah*: united, आसीत *asita* : should be.

Substance : Let him firmly hold the body, head and neck erect, and gazing on the tip of his nose, without looking around, let him sit, serene and fearless, established in the vow of celebacy, self-controlled and balanced, thinking of Me as the Supreme goal.

Commentary : The *Sadhaka* should sit on the seat with his body, head and neck erect. By so doing, the current of energy passing upwards through the nerves of the spinal column has a free and unobstructed flow towards the brain-centre called the '*Sahasrara*' in *Rajayoga*. It is in that state that high thoughts are generated and higher spiritual experiences come to the *yogi*.

During the time fixed for practice, he should not quit the seat or change the posture (*sthirah*).

Then he should not look this side or that. The mind is distracted by looking at objects around him. He should fix the gaze on the tip of the nose and start meditation. By this the mind becomes steady gradually. In the early stages, it is best to fix the gaze on the tip of the nose. The eyes are kept half-open and sleep is thereby prevented. It looks as though the Lord has provided the eyelids for this purpose only out of compassion for mankind.

Having thus fixed the gaze, he should withdraw the mind from everything else and think of the Self only, because the Self is the highest goal. The Lord is no other than the Supreme Self shining in the hearts of all beings.

The *Sadhaka* should possess four basic virtues-peace, fearlessness, celebacy and self-control. Peace, deep and limitless like the ocean should fill the mind. There should not be the least trace of fear. When the whole world is only a dream like reflection, where and what for is fear? When his own Self is everywhere what should he fear? Fear arises only when the Self is forgotten and the objective world assumes the air of reality. The *Upanishads* declare the same truth.

To some extent, the aspirant has to cultivate dispassion and devotion by spiritual enquiry into the nature of Reality, and then only *Dhyana* becomes possible. Freedom from fear comes from firm understanding of the Truth. One should know by clear rational thinking that *Atma* alone is the Reality and all the rest is only a painted picture caused by the interposition of name and form. When this truth is driven into the mind, naturally fear is eliminated, and when fear is eliminated *Dhyana* becomes easy.

Celebacy is essential for spiritual life. The body and mind acquire tremendous energy and power by celibacy. The word '*Brahmacharya*' means actually living and being in *Brahman*. Ordinarily the word refers to the control of thoughts and acts of sex and lust. The house-holders have certain principles of celibacy. What is needed is that lustful thoughts should not be

allowed to enter the mind of the aspirant. He should keep the mind and body pure. Almost all the world-movers have practised celibacy in some form or other. As the lamp cannot burn without oil, so also, spiritual life is impossible without '*Brahmacharya*'. The semen turns into energy and light. We see a peculiar light illumining the face of those who have practiced celibacy. It is said that several drops of blood becomes a drop of semen. It is energy and it is light. So the preservation of semen is essential for spiritual illumination. That is why celibacy is spoken of as a vow (*Vratam*). It is the highest vow unequalled in purity and power.

In this manner, the seeker should practise *Dhyanayoga*, thinking of the Lord (*Atma*) only, to the exclusion of everything else. Thus he should merge the mind in the Supreme.

Question : *How should the sadhaka sit for meditation* ?

Answer : With his body, head and neck erect, he should sit still and motionless till the period of practice is over.

Question : *Where should the gaze be fixed* ?

Answer : The gaze should be fixed on the tip of the nose and he should not look around.

Question : *What are the qualities required for the Sadhaka ?*

Answer : Peace, fearlessness, celibacy and self-control.

Question : *What is the aim to Dhyana* ?

Answer : Merging the mind in the Self is the aim of *Dhyana*.

The result of Dhyanayoga is mentioned.

15. युञ्जन्नेवं सदात्मानं योगी नियतमानसः ।
शान्तिं निर्वाणपरमां मत्संस्थामधिगच्छति ॥ २५

Yunjannevam sada'tmanam yogi niyatamanasah ।
santim nirvanaparamam matsamstham adhigacchati ॥ 15

Meaning : नियतमानसः *niyatamanasah* : of controlled mind, योगी *yogi:* the yogi, (practising Dhyana) सदा *sada:* ever,

एवम् *evam* : in this manner, आत्मानम् *atmanam* : mind, युञ्जन् *yunjan* : held in meditation of Atma, मत्संस्थां *matsamstham* : of My Being, निर्वाणपरमाम् *nirvanaparamam* : highest bliss of Moksha, शान्तिम् *santim* : peace, अधिगच्छति *adhigacchati* : attains.

Substance : Thus the self-controlled *Yogi* holding the mind in meditation on the Self, attains peace abiding in me which culminates in the highest bliss of liberation.

Commentary : *Dhyanayoga* leads to supreme peace and liberation. It is the peace of the Self, of the very nature of the Lord. It is not like the passing delights and pleasures of worldly life. The wise men seek the highest everlasting peace only. Self-control and continuous practice of meditation are necessary to attain such peace and bliss. So the seeker should carry on the *sadhana*, by constant discrimination by the rejection of the unreal, and by fixing the mind on the eternal Self. That is the price to pay for attaining the highest bliss of liberation.

Question : *What is the fruit of Dhyana yoga ?*

Answer : Supreme peace and bliss.

Question : *What is its nature ?*

Answer : It is liberation, *Moksha*, which is the very nature of the Self, the supreme Lord.

Question : *What should the sadhaka do to attain this peace ?*

Answer : He should control the mind and hold it in meditation on the Self.

The Lord explains how the aspirant should discipline his life.

16. नात्यश्नतस्तु योगोऽस्ति न चैकान्तमनश्नतः ।
न चाति स्वप्नशीलस्य जाग्रतो नैव चार्जुन ॥ १६

Na'tyasnatas tu yogo'sti na chai'kantam anasnatah
na cha'tisvapnasilasya jagrato nai'va cha'rjuna 16

Meaning : अर्जुन *Arjuna* : O Arjuna ! योगः *yogah* : yoga, अत्यश्नतः तु *atyasnatah tu* : verily of one who eats too much, नास्ति *na asti* : is not, एकान्तम् अनश्नतः च न *ekantam anasnatah cha na* : of one who does not eat at all is not, अतिस्वप्नशीलस्य च *atisvapnasilasya cha* : and of one who sleeps too much, न *na* : not, जाग्रतः च *jagratah cha* : and of one who is sleepless, न एव *na eva* : not also.

Substance : O Arjuna ! Verily, *yoga* is not for one who eats too much or who does not eat at all, nor for him who sleeps too much or who does not sleep at all.

Commentary : Moderation in food and sleep is the condition of *yoga* for all seekers whatever path they follow. In *Dhyana Yoga* particularly, it is of very great importance. Unless the body is light and strong, meditation is difficult to practise. So, regulation of food and sleep is prescribed as the first condition of *yoga*. Generally people think that spirituality is something not connected with the body and what they eat and how they work does not matter. It is not so. The body if not regulated is itself the chief obstacle for spiritual realisation. A sickly body subject to pain binds the mind to itself and its suffering, and does not allow it to rise to the plane of thought and meditation. We know that when the body is healthy and strong, the mind becomes free from the bondage of the body and becomes capable of higher thought and imagination. Regulation of the body is therefore emphasised many times in the Gita.

Moderation in sleep is also of great importance. Too much of sleep produces 'tamas' and all the demoniacal forces in man find free play in that state. Even so, sleeplessness causes nervous breakdown, and man becomes unfit for any kind of work, much less for *Dhyana*.

Question : *What conditions are required for yoga ?*

Answer : Moderation in food and sleep is the first condition of *Yoga*.

17. युक्ताहारविहारस्य युक्तचेष्टस्य कर्मसु ।
युक्तस्वप्नावबोधस्य योगो भवति दुःखहा ॥ १७

Yuktahara viharasya yukta chestasya karmasu ।
yukta svapnavabodhasya yogo bhavati duhkhaha ॥ 17

Meaning: युक्ताहारविहारस्य *yukataharaviharasya :* of him who is moderate in food and recreation (like working, talking etc.) कर्मसु *karmasu :* in actions, युक्तचेष्टस्य *yuktacheshtasya :* moderation in exertion, युक्तस्वप्नावबोधस्य *yuktasvapnavabodhasya:* moderation of sleep and warefulness, योगः *yogah :* yoga, दुःखहा *duhkhaha :* destroyer of all pain and suffering, भवति *bhavati :* becomes.

Substance : For him who is moderate in food and recreation, moderate in exertion in all actions, moderate in sleep and wakefulness, *yoga* destroys all pain and suffering (caused by birth and death).

Commentary : "Be moderate, avoid excess in all things" – This is the Lord's command. *Yoga* then destroys all suffering. So if man suffers, the cause for it is the excessive indulgence in some form or other. Self-control actually means the power by which man can order the body and mind to function according to the highest spiritual laws. There is no self-control for the man whose body and mind act in their own way in defiance of the spiritual laws. This principle holds good in *Dhyanayoga.* Enthusiastic beginners, with more zeal than wisdom, overdo the *sadhana,* and consequently suffer discomfort and pain, and then they give up the practice altogether thinking that they are not fit for it. Overdoing a good thing is as harmful as indulgence in bad things. Young students burn midnight oil to prepare for the examinations, and in writing the examination, they become exhausted and their whole work goes in vain. Even if they pass the examination, the after-effects of over-exertion cause some disease or other. So also in spiritual *Sadhana* the progress should be slow, steady, and sure. Over-exertion defeats

the very purpose of *yoga.* Ascetic torture of the body by fasting too much and sleeplessness is not the way of *yoga.* A moderate way of life is *yoga.* The golden mean is *yoga.* Harmony and balance is *yoga.* It shows that a man can practice *yoga* while engaged in all the activities of life by strictly adhering to the law of moderation. In fact the body itself is made and sustained on the principle of harmony, balance and moderation. Excess of heat burns it, excess of cold stiffens it. The eyes cannot see when there is excess of light; in total darkness also they cannot see. Extremes are alike. Moderate light and warmth are necessary for the proper functioning of the body. The analogy may be extended to the realm of the mind also. Excess of study dulls the brain, and causes fatigue and nervous disorders. Excess of emotion causes insanity. The nervous system breaks down by agitation and mental conflict. So moderation and harmony are the very principles of man's existence. It is the law of nature. *Yoga* (*Dhyanayoga*) is possible only for the man who avoids excess in all activities of life. The *yogi* transcends all suffering by *yoga.*

Question : *What is the reward of Dhyana Yoga ?*

Answer : All suffering is removed by *Yoga.*

Question : *What are the prescribed conditions ?*

Answer : Moderation in food and recreation, in work, in sleep and wakefulness, are the conditions of *Yoga.*

Question : *What is the way to overcome suffering ?*

Answer : *Yoga.* (Meditation on the Self, the Lord).

18. यदा विनियतं चित्तमात्मन्येवावतिष्ठते ।
निःस्पृहः सर्वकामेभ्यो युक्त इत्युच्यते तदा ॥ १८

Yada viniyctam chittamatmanyeva 'vatisthate ।
nihsprhah sarvakamebhyo yukta ity uchyate tada ॥ 18

Meaning : यदा *yada :* when, चित्तम् *chittam :* mind, विनियतम् *viniyatam :* perfectly controlled, आत्मनि एव *atmani eva:* in Atma only, अवतिष्ठते *avatishthate :* rests, सर्वकामेभ्यः *sarva–*

kamebhyah : of all desires, निःस्पृहः *nispritah :* free from longing, तदा स योगी *tada sah yogi :* then that yogi, युक्तः *yuktah :* united with Self, इति *iti :* thus, उच्यते *uchyate :* is said.

Substance : When the perfectly controlled mind rests in the Self free from longing of all enjoyments, then it is said that the *yogi* is united (with the Self).

Commentary : When the mind is merged in *Atma*, that very moment man attains *Moksha*, liberation from all the ills and evils of human existence. Three aspects of *Yogasiddhi* are mentioned here - (1) Desirelessness, (2) Control of mind, and (3) Union with *Atma*. The same process is stated in *Vedanta* in different terminology— (1) *Vasanakshaya*, (2) *Manonasa*, and (3) *Tattvajnana*. One is actioned by the others (i. e.) – by the elimination of all desires mind ceases to exist, and the *Atmajnana* is realised. When *Atmajnana* dawns the mind with all its propensity for material enjoyments is destroyed.

Desires are the shackles that bind man to *samsara*. When these desires disturb the mind, *Dhyana* is not possible. When by discrimination and dispassion, desires are rooted out, the pure mind automatically merges in *Atma* which is the source from which it has risen. All the desires without any reservation should be given up.

The mind should be brought to one focul point and remain steady at that point, namely the Self. The least distraction draws it away from the object of meditation.

The mind should rest in *Atma* alone, to the complete exclusion of everything else. When there are no desires and distractions, the mind by itself comes to rest in its own source—*Atma*.

Such a *yogi* who rests steadfast in *Atma* is *Yogarudha*. He is united with the supreme Self.

Question : *When is it said that man has attained unity with Atma?*

Answer : When there are no desires, when the mind is controlled and rests in the Self, then it is said that *Yogasiddhi* is achieved. When these conditions are fulfilled, man attains liberation, (*Moksha*) freedom from every thing that binds man to earthily life.

The state of mind in samadhi is described :

19. यथा दीपो निवातस्थो नेङ्गते सोपमा स्मृता ।
योगिनो यतचित्तस्य युञ्जतो योगमात्मनः ॥ १९

Yatha dipo nivatastho ne'ngate so 'pama smrita । 19
yogino yatachittasya yunjato yogam atmanah ॥

Meaning : निवातस्थः *nivatasthah :* kept in airless place, दीपः *dipah :* lamp, यथा *yatha :* as, नेङ्गते *nengate :* does not flicker, सः *sah :* that, आत्मनः योगम् *atmanah yogam :* the yoga of the Self, युञ्जतः *yunjatah :* practising, योगिनः *yoginah :* of the yogi, यतचित्तस्य *yatachittasya :* of controlled mind, उपमा *upama :* comparison, स्मृता *smrita :* is thought.

Substance : As the lamp in a windless place does not flicker-that is thought to be the comparison of the *yogi* of controlled mind practising union with Self through *Dhyanayoga*.

Commentary : The mind of the *yogi* in meditation is compared to a steady light kept in a windless place. The illustration is fassinating and appropriate. Like the lamp, the mind of the *yogi* is effulgent with the light of knowledge, and it is also steady. The windows of the senses through which the objective world gets into the mind causing destruction are closed by perfect self-control, and so the mind remains steady and firm in meditation. Just as the orb of the Sun is clearly reflected in a pure calm lake when there are no ripples or waves, so also the Self is clearly reflected in a pure calm mind. The impure mind is unsteady and restless due to the winds of desire blowing constantly, like the light placed in a windy place.

Question: *To what is the meditating mind of the yogi compared?*

Answer : It is compared to a lamp kept in a windless place. The idea is, the mind of the *yogi* is steady and illumined with the light of Knowledge.

Question : *How should the mind be when it is to be merged in Atma?*

Answer : It should be perfectly controlled and free from any kind of disturbance resulting from the play of the senses.

The excellence of Dhyana Yoga leading to Self-realisation is declared.

20. यत्रोपरमते चित्तं निरुद्धं योगसेवया ।
यत्र चैवात्मनात्मानं पश्यन्नात्मनि तुष्यति ॥ २०

21. सुखमात्यन्तिकं यत्तद्बुद्धिग्राह्यमतीन्द्रियम् ।
वेत्ति यत्र न चैवायं स्थितश्चलति तत्त्वतः ॥ २१

22. यं लब्ध्वा चापरं लाभं मन्यते नाधिकं ततः ।
यस्मिन्स्थितो न दुःखेन गुरुणापि विचाल्यते ॥ २२

23. तं विद्याद्दुःखसंयोगवियोगं योगसंज्ञितम् ।
स निश्चयेन योक्तव्यो योगोऽनिर्विण्णचेतसा ॥ २३

Yatro 'paramate chittam niruddham yogasevaya |
yatra chai 'va 'tmana 'tmanam pasyann atmani tushyati || 20
Sukham atyantikam yat tad buddhigrahyam atindriyam |
vetti yatra na chai 'va 'yam sthitas chalati tattvatah | 21
Yam labdhva cha 'param labham manyate na 'dhikam tatah |
yasmin sthito na duhkhena guruna 'pi vichalyate || 22
Tam vidyad duhkhasamyogaviyogam yogasamjnitam |
sa nischayena yoktavyo yogo 'nirvinna chetasa || 23

Meaning : योगसेवया *yogasevaya :* by the practise of yoga, निरुद्धम् *niruddham :* restrained (turned away from sense-objects), चित्तम् *chittam :* mind, यत्र *Yatra :* where, उपरमते *uparamate :* rests, यत्रच *yatra cha :* and where, आत्मना *atmana :* by the self, आत्मानम् *atmanam :* the Self, पश्यन् *pasyam :* seing, आत्मनि एव *atmani eva :* in the Self only, तुष्यति *tushyati :* is delighted, यत्र *yatra :* where, स्थितः *sthitah :* established in, अयम् *ayam :* this yogi, यत् *yat :* which (sukham), अतीन्द्रियम् *atindriyam :* transcending the senses, बुद्धिग्राह्यम् *buddhigrahyam :* understandable by the intellect, आत्यन्तिकम् *atyantikam :* infinite, तत् सुखम् *tat sukham:* that bliss, वेत्ति *vetti :* knows, च *cha :* and, तत्त्वतः *tattvatah:* from experience of Self, न एव चलति *na eva chalati :* does not even move, यम् *yam :* which, लब्ध्वा *labdhva :* possessing, अपरम् *aparam :* other, लाभम् *labham :* gain, ततः *tatah :* than that, अधिकम् *adhikam :* more, न मन्यते *na manyate :* does not think, यस्मिन् *yasmin :* in which, स्थितः *sthitah :* established, गुरुणा *guruna :* by great, दुःखेनापि *duhkhena api :* sorrow even, न विचाल्यते *na vichalayate :* is not shaken, दुःखसंयोगवियोगम् *duhkhasamyogaviyogam :* freedom from sorrow, तम् *tam:* that, योगसंज्ञितम् *yogasamjnitam:* called yoga, union with Self, विद्यात् *vidyat :* (the yogi) should know, सयोगः *sah yogah :* that yoga, अनिर्विण्णचेतसा *anirvinna-chetasa :* with undesponding mind, निश्चयेन *nischayena :* with determination, योक्तव्यः *yoktavyah :* should be attained.

Substance : Where the mind rests restrained by the practice of *yoga*, and where the self seeing the Self is delighted in the Self; and where established, the *yogi* knows that bliss which transcends the senses, which is understandable by the purified intellect only, and from the experience of Self does not even move; possessing which, he does not think any other gain greater than that; in which established he is not shaken even by great sorrow; that should be known by the term *yoga*, and that *yoga* which is free from sorrow should be attained by the undesponding and determined mind.

Commentary : These four verses should be taken together. The excellence of *Dhyanayoga* by which union with Self is attained and the *Atmic* state is experienced, is explained here.

When the mind merges in *Atma*, man experiences supreme peace and bliss. That is the goal of life. But the perfectly

controlled mind only can go near *Atma* and merge in it. The mind should be purified and withdrawn from the sense-objects. How to purify and control the mind? By the practice of *yoga* it should be controlled. Just as the ordinary man wastes his life in worldly pursuits (*Vishayaseva*) - the wise man spends his life usefully in '*Yogaseva*'. So let '*Vishayaseva*' be transformied into '*Yogaseva*', and let man thus attain the highest.

By the practice of *yoga*, the seeker perceives *A ma*. *Atma* is not a theoretical proposition to be comprehended by vain logic and argument. It is the Reality which can be seen (i. e.) brought into one's own consciousness. The idea is that *Atma* is not like a material object which is seen with the eyes, and yet it can be known by direct experience. Seeing means experience. Nothing else can reveal the Self except the purified mind.

Where is this *Atma*, the Lord ? *Atma* is in one's own self. The searchlight of the mind should be focussed on one's own heart, because *Atma*, the Lord, in there. He is nearest to us, nearer than anything else external or internal. We are in Him and He is in us. This idea should give us invincible strength in our *sadhana*. What is it that one gains by unveiling *Atma* in himself? He comes to possess supreme joy. Having tired himself out by seeking for petty pleasures here and there, he rests himself in his own Self and then he finds the treasure for which he has been searching everywhere.

What is the nature of the joy felt in *Atma* ? It is infinite and transcendental; it is to be comprehended by the purified intellect. When the intellect is purified, it discards its enveloping ignorance, and is transformed into the Self. The bliss of the Self is experienced directly. It can never be felt by those whose minds are externalised by contact with sense-objects. How can intellect comprehend the Atmic *Ananda* ? Though the intellect is also an organ of the mind, yet when it attains perfect purity, it discards its material form and assumes the form of Brahman. It is just like a salt-doll merging in the sea. When the salt-doll touches the sea, does it retain its former shape ? No. Similarly, the intellect, when it is purified, becomes That. There is no one

who does not possess the intellect. Only it is not pure. It is deluded by *avidya*, and many impure '*vasanas*' inhere in it. What the seeker has to do is to wash it, clean it, make it sharp and bright, so that it can perceive the Reality as it is. The bliss of the Self is infinite (*atyantikam*) because it is unlike any other joy, derived from worldly objects through the senses. The seeker should learn not to hanker after wretched short-lived pleasures. Having once experienced the *Atmic Ananda*, never again does man move away from it. True. Does the bee drinking honey from a full blown lotus, leaves it and go away to some other withered flower ? When a man possesses the real thing, be it a jewel or a flower, does he hanker after its image in a photograph or a picture? If he does so, it only means that he is not in possession of the real thing. When a man thinks of dream-pleasures, it only shows that he is not fully awakened from sleep.

Having attained the Self-state, the sage does not think of obtaining any other thing in this world or in any other. Even the position of Indra is nothing to him, not to speak of all the wealth, position and power of this world. Worldly things are momentary, and even if they are permanent, the human body with which they are to be enjoyed is itself subject to death at any moment. Let people cultivate faith in the Lord's teaching and stop begging for foolish pleasures which they have had through innumerable births, which are repeating themselves endlessly without their being aware of it. How many times in previous births one had wife and children? How many times was he on the crest of the wave of success, and how many times was he plunged in the depths of despair ? These things have come to beings innumerable times, but they are not able to recollect them. They have been here millions of times, and gone through the endless series of births and deaths. Knowing this, does any man thirst and hunger for insipid things? No. There is only one thing that man should attain, and that is the Supreme Reality.

The sage who has reached the plane of *Atma* is not moved even by the greatest disaster. We see people who are upset even

by the slightest inconvenience or discomfort. There is the constant fear of losing the body, fear of poverty, fear of shame and disgrace, and a host of subtle fears which cause misery to man, however highly placed and powerful he may be. The sage alone is free from fear, because he has seen and known the imperishable Reality. Nothing can throw him off his balance. He will face the worst form of disease, dishonour, death without the least trace of physical or mental disturbance. He is immovable established in the Self. There is no other way by which the ills and evils of life could be overcome.

Who can attain this Self-state? It is attained by him who is undespondent and determined. The aspirant should not be detered by any obstacle or difficulty on the spiritual path. He should have supreme self-reliance. 'I will attain That, whatever may happen,'-thus should he think always. Despondency, timidity and diffidence - these feelings should not be allowed to weaken the mind. Whatever may be the obstacles in *Sadhana*, the aspirant should not give up hope. The power of *Maya* is infinite, and yet for the determined self who has obtained the grace of the *Guru* and the Lord nothing is impossible.

Question : *By what is the mind sustained ?*

Answer : By the practice of *Yoga* (*Yogaseva*).

Question : *Which mind is merged in Atma ?*

Answer : The mind withdrawn from the senses and purified.

Question : *By what is Atma perceived ?*

Answer : By the purified mind and intellect.

Question : *Where ?*

Answer : In one's own self.

Question : *What is the fruit of knowing Atma ?*

Answer : Supreme bliss - *Moksha*.

Question : *What is the nature of Atmananda ?*

Answer : It is infinite, and it transcends the senses.

Question : *If it transcends the senses how to know it ?*

Answer : By the purified mind (*Buddhigrahyam*)

Question : *What will the self-realised man do ?*

Answer : He does not move away from it.

Question : *What is the hiughest good for man?*

Answer : The possesssion of *Atma* (*Atmaprapti*).

Question : *What is the sign of self-realisation ?*

Answer : He is not affected even by the greastest sorrow.

Question : *So, what is the way to overcome sorrow ?*

Answer : Attainment of *Atma*

Question : *What is that Atmic state ?*

Answer : It has not the slightest touch of sorrow.

Question : *How can man attain it ?*

Answer : By the undespondent and determined mind.

The process of Dhyana is explained.

24. सङ्कल्पप्रभवान्कामांस्त्यक्त्वा सर्वानशेषतः ।
मनसैवेन्द्रियग्रामं विनियम्य समन्ततः ॥ २४

25. शनैः शनैरुपरमेद्बुद्ध्या धृतिगृहीतया ।
आत्मसंस्थं मनः कृत्वा न किञ्चिदपि चिन्तयेत् ॥ २५

Samkalpa prabhavan kamamstyaktva sarvan asheshatah ॥
manasai 've 'ndriya gramam viniyamya samantatah ॥ 24

Sanaih-sanairuparamed buddhya dhritigrhitaya ।
atmasamstham manah kritva na kimchid api chintayet ॥

Meaning : संकल्पप्रभवान् *samkalpaprabhavan :* born in the ego-centric will, कामान् *kaman :* desires, सर्वान् *sarvan :* all, अशेषतः *asheshatah :* completely, त्यक्त्वा *tyaktva :* having abandoned,

मनसा एव *manasa eva* : with the mind only, इन्द्रियग्रामम् *indriya-gramam* : the group of senses, समन्ततः *samantata* : on all sides, विनियम्य *viniyamya* : restraining, धृतिगृहीतया *dhritgrihitya* : held firmly, बुद्ध्या *budhya* : with the intellect, शनैः शनैः *sanai sanaih* : slowly and slowly, उपरमेत् *uparamet* : attain quietude, मनः *manah* : the mind, आत्मसंस्थम् *atmasamstham* : established in Atma, कृत्वा *kritva* : having made, किञ्चिदपि न चिन्तयेत् *kimchidapi na chintayet* : at all (other than Atma) should not think.

Substance: Having abandoned all desires born of the ego-centric will, having restrained the group of senses with mind from all sides, one should attain quietude slowly and slowly by the intellect held firmly. And then, fixing the mind in *Atma*, he should not think of anything else at all.

Commentary: In the early part of this Discourse, the external aspects of meditation, like the place, the seat, and the posture, have been explained. Now, the Lord explains the internal process of *Dhyana Yoga*.

All the desires should be given up completely. What is the source of these desires? They are born of the ego-centric will (*sankalpa*). So desires are described as born from Sankalpa (*samkalpa prabhavah*). When there is no *sankalpa* (thought) there is no desire. By discrimination and dispassion, it is possible to root out *Samkalpa*. All desires without reservation should be given up completely. We have to note that whenever the Lord speaks of desires, he invariably refers to 'all' of them, because he knows that one desire leads to another, and that to a third, and they would extend to infinity if they are allowed to breed. So, the instruction is that all desires should be abandoned completely. When there are no desires, the mind is calm and collected, and it can be made to rest in the Self. So for *Dhyana Yoga* abandoning all desires is essential.

The whole group of senses should be restrained from all sides. Even here, the Lord insists on total restraint of all the

senses, not partial control of all the senses or complete control of some of the senses. The words '*indriyagramam*' and '*samantatah*' show that in *Dhyana Yoga* total control of every one of the senses is essential. The mind is the instrument of control. The senses are like wild horses, and the mind is the strong rein to check their turbulent behaviour. If the mind is pure and godly, what can the senses do? They are automatically brought under control. If the mind is impure on account of past *samskaras*, then they draw the mind away from the spiritual path. So it is said 'be controlled by purity of mind acquired through discrimination and dispassion'.

Then the aspirant should attain quietude by the intellect held firmly. This stillness or quietude is the effect of shutting out the external world by perfect sense-control. Intellect is higher than the mind (*Manastu para buddhih*). But the intellect will be powerless to assert itself if it does not function with firmness, courage, and determination. The rebellious mind will overpower the intellect and make it dance to its tune. If the mind is like a tiger, the intellect should be like the lion. Then only the mind yields to the immovable determining will of the intellect, and turns inside to see the Self.

The process of sense-control and mind-control should be carried on slowly and slowly (*sanaih–sanaih*). Force should be avoided. The mind should be turned inwards by long slow steady practice. It should be persuaded and induced to get back to its source, from the objective world where it has wandered about for many many lives without check or control or guidance. On account of past momentum, the mind runs out inspite of one's best effort to stop it. One may hold it by violence, but it cannot be for long. Again when the control is relaxed, it runs in its old grooves. By violent repression, the inner personality may be damaged. So persuation is the only way. Let the mind be told that what it is running after is after all a mirge, that if it turns inwards it would find a nobler and higher treasure, and that its external attachments have brought only pain and suffering. Thus thinking discriminating and reasoning the mind will gradually change its former attitude.

As it finds rest and peace within, it would be induced to rest in the Self longer and longer. The practice should be carried on day after day, and only then the mind comes to rest. Slow and steady wins the race.

The teaching of the Gita contains the essence of all *sastras* and the aim of all kinds of *Sadhana*. The mind should be fixed in *Atma*, and nothing else should be thought of. As the mind contemplates *Atma*, it is more and more absorbed in it, till finally it is dissolved like a bit of salt in the sea.

Dhyana in its highest stage is oneness with the object of meditation. So there is nothing other than *Atma* in that state. If the mind deviates from its aim even for a second, by the intrusion of some thought, *Dhyana* is interrupted. That is why the Lord declares that nothing other than *Atma* should be allowed to crop up in the mind during meditation.

This exhortation of the Gita should be remembered and thought of by all the seekers–"Establish the mind in *Atma* and do not think of any thing else," May this be practically realised by all earnest seekers on the spiritual path.

Question : *What are the conditions to be adopted by one practising Dhyana Yoga ?*

Answer : He should give up all desires completely. He should restrain the senses and the mind from all sides. He should turn the mind inwards by the control of the determined intellect and fix it in the Self. He should not think of anything other than *Atma*.

Question : *From whence do desires arise ?*

Answer : Desires arise from the ego–centric will.

Question *What is the type of intellect needed for controlling the mind ?*

Answer : The intellect should be firm and undespondent.

Question : *How should Dhyana be performed ?*

Answer : *Dhayana* on the Self should be done slowly and slowly.

The distractions of the mind should be controlled by persistent effort.

26. यतो यतो निश्चरति मनश्चञ्चलमस्थिरम् ।
ततस्ततो नियम्यैतदात्मन्येव वशं नयेत् ॥ २६

Yato–yato nischarati manas chanchalam asthiram ।
tatas–tato niyamyai'tad atmanyeva vasam nayet ॥ 26

Meaning : चञ्चलम् *chamchalam :* moving, अस्थिरम् *asthiram:* unsteady, मनः *manah :* mind, यतः यतः *yatah yatah :* from whatever cause towards whichever sense–objects, निश्चरति *nischarati :* wanders away, ततः ततः *tatah tatah :* from that, एतत् *etat :* the mind, नियम्य *niyamya :* controlling, (drawing the mind back), आत्मनि एव *atmani eva :* in Atma only, वशम् *vasam:* under control, नयेत् *nayet :* (let him) bring.

Substance : Towards whatsoever sense-objects the moving and unsteady mind wanders away from them all it should be withdrawn and fixed in *Atma*.

Commentary : In the previous verse it is said that having fixed the mind in *Atma* nothing else should be thought of. If the mind wanders away from the target of meditation what should be done ? This question is answered here. The Gita is a practical science, and so every kind of difficulty which the seeker has to face is stated, and explained, and the method pointed out to overcome it.

The mind is restless and unsteady. In the beginning it is never fixed on the object of meditation. It runs away and begins to think of one thousand things of worldly life. The seeker may become despondent that it would be never able to acquire steadiness in meditation. But there is no cause for despondency. The Lord here advises the aspirant to bring back the mind again and again, and fix it in *Atma*. This practice should go on as long as the mind deviates from *Atma*. But as long as the mind is tempted by objects of enjoyment, it would

naturally run after them. So, one should enlighten the mind to understand the painful nature of worldly enjoyments (*dukhadoshanudarsanam*). When the mind thus understands their worthlessness and painful character, it does not run after them. As the mind rests in the Self, it experiences the higher bliss of peace, and then it would not wander away from the '*lakshya*' (*Atma*).

Therefore the aspirant has to observe the activities of the mind carefully. The ignorant man identifies himself with the mind, and so he is not able to understand how the mind is misleading him in a hundred ways. The seeker gains the knowledge that the mind is betraying him, and so he looks upon its vagaries with care and caution. By observing and examining the mind, he neutralises its evil force. Desire is a form of the mind. When desires arise they should be relentlessly scrutinised and rejected. Then *Atma* alone shines and real peace floods the heart. So the Lord here states that the mind should be trained to rest in *Atma* by ceaseless practice.

Question : *What is the nature of the mind ?*

Answer : It is restless and unsteady.

Question : *When the mind wanders away in meditation what should be done ?*

Answer : It should be brought back again and again and fixed in *Atma*.

The reward of 'Atmanishtha' is declared.

27. प्रशान्तमनसं ह्येनं योगिनं सुखमुत्तमम् ।
उपैति शान्तरजसं ब्रह्मभूतमकल्मषम् ॥ २७

Prasantamanasam hyenam yoginam sukhamuttamam
upaiti santa rajasam brahma bhutam akalmasam 27

Meaning : प्रशान्तमनसम् *prasantamanasam* : of tranquil mind, शान्तरजसम् *santarajasam* : of subdued Rajacic qualities like kama and krodha, ब्रह्मभूतम् *brahmabhutam* : whoh as become one with Brahman, अकल्मषम् *akalmasham* : free from

evil, एनं योगिनम् *enam yoginam* : to this yogi, उत्तमम् *uttamam* : supreme, सुखम् *sukham* : joy, उपैतिहि *upaiti hi* : comes indeed.

Substance : To this *Yogi* of tranquil mind, of subdued Rajas, who has become *Brahman*, free from evil, comes supreme joy indeed.

Commentary : The *Yogi* who enjoys supreme bliss is described here. The happiness that one enjoys in the material world is not the highest. There is no fulness of joy in the objective world. All the worldly pleasures are conditioned by time, place, and circumstances. When these change the pleasures themselves become pains. Even the joy of *Indra* has limitation and is subject to time. It comes and goes. The joy of *Atma* alone is beyond time and place and is not affected by any change of circumstances. The wise man naturally seeks for the best and the highest. The *Yogi* who is tranquil in mind, in whom Rajasic tendencies like *Kama* and *Krodha* are brought to rest, who is free from evil, enjoys supreme joy. While all the people are running hither and thither, doing this and that, in order to secure the elusive phantom of delight - and all the time missing it - to the *Yogi* who lives in **Brahman**, joy, the best and the highest, comes of its own accord and possesses him !

The mind should become pure (*akalmasham*). **If anybody** opens a house which has been uninhabited for a long time, he finds in it dust, cobwebs, rats, bats, scorpions and other poisonous reptiles. The whole house should be cleaned many times, and all the undesirable occupants driven out, before it is made fit for habitation. Even so, the mind of man, through several births, has been enveloped in darkness, and snakes of *Kama* and *Krodha*, rats of *Raga* and *Dvesha*, have found convenient breeding place in it. Now for the first time, the awakened man has to start the work of cleansing the whole mass of evil, with all its inhibitations, prejudices, superstitions etc. When it becomes pure, *Atma*, the Lord, would manifest Himself there. By peace and purity, man realises ***Brahman*.** The *Jiva* becomes *Siva* himself. The *chitta* (mind) when it is

purified becomes Chit (Knowledge) (i. e.) it becomes one with *Atma*. Such a *Yogi* inherits his birth-right of *Brahmananda.*

Question : *What is the highest joy ?*

Answer : The joy of *Atma* (*Moksha*).

Question · *Who attains it ?*

Answer : The man of tranquil mind, free from evil and Rajasic tendencies, attains it.

Question *What then is the way to attain the highest joy?*

Answer : To keep the mind always tranquil and calm, to eliminate desire and anger and all other evil attachments, is the way to attain that supreme bliss.

28. युञ्जन्नेवं सदात्मानं योगी विगतकल्मषः ।
सुखेन ब्रह्मसंस्पर्शमत्यन्तं सुखमश्नुत ॥ २८

Yunjann evam sad ' 'tmanam yogi vigata kalmashah ।
sukhena brahma samsparsam atyantam sukham asnute ॥ 28

Meaning : एवम् *evam* : thus, सदा *sada* : always, आत्मानम् *atmanam* : mind, युञ्जन् *yunjan:* uniting with Atma (practising yoga), विगतकल्मषः *vigatakalmashah* : free from evil, योगी *yogi* : the yogi, सुखेन *sukhena* : easily, ब्रह्मसंस्पर्शम् *brahmasamsparsam* : realisation of Brahman, अत्यन्तम् *atyantam* : infinite, सुखम् *sukham* : happiness, अश्नुते *asnute* : attains.

Substance : Thus the *yogi* free from evil, practising *yoga* (union with *Atma*) always, attains easily the highest bliss resulting from contact with *Brahman.*

Commentary : Several people ask "What is the easiest way to attain *Brahman*?" The Lord answers the question here. Two practices should be followed. (1) The mind should be free from evil thoughts and tendencies. (2) It should be brought to dwell in *Atma* by *Dhyana Yoga.*

The Lord emphasises the need for absolute purity of mind everywhere in the Gita. *Atmajnana* cannot dawn on an impure mind. The evil mind cannot merge in *Atma.* Attachment to material things is diametrically opposite to *Atma* which is unconditioned and uncontaminated by any other things. As the mind becomes purer and purer, it comes into contact with *Brahman* which is the source of the highest bliss. So purification of mind, and meditation on *Atma* are both mentioned here as the path to supreme joy.

The practice should be continued constantly (*sada*). That is, in whatever manner, a man may be engaged, the memory of *Atma* should not be slip out of the mind. Such a *yogi* attains *Brahmasakshatkara.* No worldly object however valuable it may be can help man to touch the Reality. How can a reflection touch the Reality ? How can matter possess the spirit ? Only the pure mind can approach *Atma*, can become united with Him. In that state one experiences indescribable bliss. It is infinite and unlike anything that is enjoyed in all the worlds. The bliss of Hiranyagarbha is also like a drop in the ocean of Brahmananda–so declare the *Upanishads.* Any one can attain it even in this life by following the conditions prescribed by the Lord.

Question : *What is the easy path to attain the bliss of liberation ?*

Answer : To remove all evil *samskaras* from the mind, to engage the mind constantly in the contemplation of *Atma*, is the easiest means to attain the highest bliss.

Question : *What is the nature of Atmic Ananda ?*

Answer : It is infinite and is of the same essence as Brahman.

How the yogi acts in practical life is explained.

29. सर्वभूतस्थमात्मानं सर्वभूतानि चात्मनि ।
ईक्षते योगयुक्तात्मा सर्वत्र समदर्शनः ॥ २९

Sarvabhutastham atmanam sarvabhutani cha 'tmani ।
ikshate yogayuktatma sarvatra samadarsanah ॥ 29

Meaning : योगयुक्तात्मा *yogayuktatma :* he who is harmonised in yoga, सर्वत्र *sarvatra :* everywhere, समदर्शनः *samadarsanah :* seeing the same (Atma), आत्मानम् *atmanam :* Self, सर्वभूतस्थम् *sarvabhutastham :* existing in all, सर्वभूतानि *sarvabhutani* all beings, आत्मनिच *atmanicha :* and in Self, ईक्षते *ikshate :* sees.

Substance : The sage harmonised in *yoga* sees the Self in all beings, and all beings in the Self; he sees the same every where.

Commentary : Here the word *yoga* means union with *Atma*, the merging of the individual self in *Brahman*. The sage who has attained this state of *yoga* sees everything in his own Self, and his own Self in everything. He looks upon every thing with an equal eye. Let us understand the position.

The whole of the objective universe is super–imposed on the basic universal consciousness– *Atma* or Self or *Brahman*. As the dream is superimposed on the consciousness of the wakeful man, as the snake is superimposed on the rope, so the entire universe is superimposed on *Atma*. What is superimposed cannot in reality be different from the original substance. The sanke is not different from the rope. It has no separate existence. Even so, the seeker who has realised *Brahman* in himself, finds the same everywhere. This vision is possible only for the sage who has attained union with *Brahman* (*Atma*) by the practice of *Dhyana Yoga*, or any other *Yoga*. The sage has discovered that he is not the body, and so instead of limiting himself to the body and seeing everything as separate fragments, he sees the all-pervading *Atma* in himself and in all things. Separateness comes from identification with the body. As body, one is different from everything else, and everything is different from every other thing. This separateness is born of ignorance which binds man to the body. When this ignorance is dispelled, man comes to know that he is *Atma*, and *Atma* is universal. So he finds that he as *Atma* is all that exists, and all that exists is himself as *Atma*. This vision removes all conflicts and tensions everywhere.

The sage is therefore full of love and compassion for all, and he takes no credit for being generous and large-hearted because love for others is only love of Self in all things, It has been taught that selfless love for others is the highest morality, highest ethical principle. The explanation for this ethical doctrine is the spiritual concept of Self-realisation. Why do people advocate love for all ? It is because there is only one Self in all. Love reveals this oneness. The *Yogi* knows the secret of life and the human personality. He knows that a separate existence for himself and for everyone else is only a myth and a superstition. What exists in all is *Atma*, and *Atma* alone exists. This is the basis of all morality and the explanation of all love.

The seeker who believes this, though he has not attained direct vision, should cultivate an equal attitude towards all beings. He should free himself from anger, envy, jealousy and all uncharitable thoughts. He should have a large-hearted friendly feeling towards all.

Question : *What qualities should the Yogi possess ?*

Answer : He should look up on all beings with an equal eye, and see the Self in all, and all in the Self.

He who sees God everywhere and finds everything in God, is ever with God.

30. यो मां पश्यति सर्वत्र सर्वं च मयि पश्यति ।
तस्याहं न प्रणश्यामि स च मे न प्रणश्यति ॥ ३०

Yo mam pasyati sarvatra sarvam cha mayi pasyati ।
tasya 'ham na pranasyami sa cha me na pranasyati ॥ 30

Meaning : यः *yah :* who, सर्वत्र *sarvatra :* in all beings, माम् *mam :* Me (Atma), पश्यति *pasyati :* sees, सर्वंच *sarvam cha :* and all beings, मयि *mayi :* in Me (Atma), पश्यति *pasyati :* sees, तस्य *tasya :* to him, अहम् *aham :* I (the Lord), न प्रणश्यामि *na pranasyami :* do not vanish, स च *sah cha :* and he, मे *me :* to me, न प्रणश्यति *na pranasyah :* does not vanish.

Substance : He who sees Me in all beings and all beings in me never becomes lost to me, nor do I become lost to him.

Commentary : Lord Krishna is Paramatma in all, and so the *Yogi* of universal vision sees the Lord everywhere and every thing in the Lord. When the individual self has become one with *Atma*, the individual and the supreme Self live together. How can one be lost to the other ? Here the word 'pasyati' does not mean seeing with the physical eye. Seeing is experiencing the Self everywhere.

From the point of view of the devotee the Lord is Paramatma. It is explained here how the Lord's grace works on the devotee. He who sees the Lord everywhere receives the fulness of his grace. The Lord is ever alive to the devotee, and the devotee is ever alive to the Lord. No doubt all are children of the Lord. But the devotee has given up his child's play with material things, and yearns to live with the Lord. So the Lord has him ever under his loving eye and watchful care. Of what avail is it to spend a whole life-time seeking for the favour of some petty worldly person when the Lord Himself is ever near the individual, ready to confer the highest blessings of life? Why not approach Him ? Through *Jnana*, equal vision and purity the Lord's grace could be obtained in full. Having once obtained it, never is it lost again. To see the Lord in all and the Lord in all things is the aim of *Yogi*. This is *Sarvatmadrishti*.

Question : *What is the effect of union with Atma ?*

Answer : The *Yogi* sees the Lord in all things, and lives ever with the Lord.

The Yogi of universal vision lives in the Lord, whatever he does.

31. सर्वभूतस्थितं यो मां भजत्येकत्वमास्थितः ।
सर्वथा वर्तमानोऽपि स योगी मयि वर्तते ॥ ३१

Sarvabhuta sthitam yo mam bhajatyekatvamasthitah ।
sarvatha vartamano 'pi sa yogi mahi vartate ॥ 31

Meaning : सर्वभूतस्थितम् *sarvabhutasthitam :* abiding in all beings, माम् *mam :* Me, यः *yah :* who, एकत्वम् *ekatvam :* in unity, आस्थितः *asthitah :* established, भजति *bhajati :* worship, स योगी *sah yogi :* that yogi, सर्वथा वर्तमानः अपि *sarvadha vartamanah api :* in every way remaining even, मयि *Mayi :* in Me, वर्तते *vartate :* abides.

Substance : The *Yogi* who worships Me abiding in all beings and who is established in unity abides in me in whatever manner he is acting.

Commentary : Where is God ? What is the way to establish oneself in Him ? These questions are answered here. God exists everywhere, in all beings of the universe. Nothing exists where He is not. Like cream in milk, like honey in flowers, like sugar in sugar-cane, God is present in everything. So knowing that God is present in all, one should not harm others. One should have friendly feeling and kindness for all beings, and do service to them. This would be worship of the Lord.

The *Yogi* who has realised the oneness of all beings by perceiving the Lord as the inner reality, lives forever in the Lord. Just as the same Sun is reflected in a thousand different globules of water, just as the same man can play different parts in a drama by change of dress, just as the same gold exists in a hundred varieties of jewels, just as the same clay appears in pots of different shape and size, even so, the Lord exists in everything as the undifferentiated substratum. To worship Him and meditate on Him is the way to reach Him.

The *Yogi* does not always remain in meditation. There are times when he acts in the world. Will he then lose contact with the Lord ? This doubt is cleared here. Though the *Yogi* is engaged in a hundred practical works in the world, he lives in the Lord. This is the Lord's declaration. Like the mariner's compass whose needle always points to the North, the mind of the *Yogi* is always in union with the Lord, though he is acting in the world in a variety of ways. This becomes natural to him by long practice. So he never commits the error of thinking that he is different from others, though from a physical angle of view, every being is separate from every thing else. Absorption

in *samadhi* or work in the world are the same for him, because he sees the same Reality in both. This is the secret of all mighty works performed by the perfected *Yogi* for the benefit of mankind. Writing good books, delivering lectures, conversing and explaining the scriptures, relieving the poor and the suffering, organising people for holy purposes, moving and acting with common humanity, the perfected *yogi* lives in the Lord only, and has no idea of his being a separate individual.

In every way: The word has to be carefully understood. The Lord has not prescribed the nature of action here. But it is self-evident that wilful and sinful actions are not intended. The man who acts in evil ways is neither a *Jnani* nor a *Bhakta*. The perfected has already transcended all *Tamasic* and *Rajasic* propensities. His actions are born of *satva guna*. So they are all pure and helpful, never impure and injurious. It is intended to suggest that the *yogi* may remain in the ecstasy of meditation or may be actively working in the world, but in both cases he sees and lives in the Lord.

Question : *Where is God ?*

Answer : He is in all beings.

Question : *What should man do to attain Him ?*

Answer : He should cultivate equal and universal vision of the Lord in all things.

Question : *How should he work in the world ?*

Answer : Whether he is absorbed in *samadhi* or works in the world, he sees the Lord everywhere and abides in him.

He who sees all beings like unto himself is the best of all.

32. आत्मौपम्येन सर्वत्र समं पश्यति योऽर्जुन ।
सुखं वा यदि वा दुःखं स योगी परमो मतः ॥ ३२

Atmaupamyena sarvatra samam pasyati yo 'rjuna ।
sukham va yadi va duhkham sa yogi paramo matah ॥ 32

Meaning : अर्जुन *arjuna* : O Arjuna, सर्वत्र *sarvatra* : in all beings, सुखं वा *sukham va* : or happiness, यदि वा दुःखम् *yadiva duhkam* : or even sorrow, आत्मौपम्येन *atmaupamyena* : like unto himself, समम् *samam* : the same, यः *yah* : who, पश्यति *pasyati* : sees, स योगी *sah yogi* : that yogi, परमः *paramah*: the best, मतः *matah* : is thought to be.

Substance : He who judges pleasure or pain everywhere, by the same standard as he applies to himself, that *yogi* is thought to be the highest.

Commentary : The practical aspect of *Vedanta* is emphasised here. It is in action that philosophy has to be tested and proved. It may be easily said "All is Self, the Lord is all." How then should he act in the world ? That is the question. The sincere aspirant should be true to himself in word and deed. He should speak only that which he knows, and practise that which he speaks. So should religious spirit permeate all the words and actions of its votaries. Otherwise their words are of no use. It is the divergence between theory and practice that brings disrepute to a person. The man who speaks religion should be exemplary in his conduct. When it is accepted that *Atma* is the reality in all beings, what should be the practical conduct of the *yogi* ? How should he think, feel and act ? He should intimately feel that the joys and sorrows of all beings are just the same as his own. The pangs of hunger, and the bereavement of other people are of the same nature as his own. He understands the sufferings of others not only of men but of animals and other beings in the same spirit as his own suffering. He shares the gladness of others, and he suffers the pains of others. Such universality of feeling distinguishes the *yogi* of the highest perfection. This is religion brought into the field of practical action.

The Lord exhorts mankind – "Oh Ye mortals desirous of attaining me ! Love others as you love yourself, feel for others as you feel for yourself. Be full of kindness and compassion, and then only are you one with Me." Thesis like 'All is

Brahman' (*Sarvam Khalvidam Brahma*) has no meaning if the heart of man remains closed to the pains and pleasures of others. Man must be able to identify himself with others and partake of their joys and sorrows. The brotherhood of man taught in all religions is good. But here, the truth is enlarged to embrace all creation. The Gita and the Upanishads declare the unity of the whole universe by the presence of the Supreme Lord in everything. The teachings of Gita have broken up all barriers not only between man and man, but also between man and all other beings. The *yogi* should see the same *Atma* everywhere. He is the best of *yogis* who has attained this intimate identity with every being in the universe.

Arjuna confesses his inability to practise this Dhyana Yoga as his mind is restless.

अर्जुन उवाच

33. योऽयं योगस्त्वया प्रोक्तः साम्येन मधुसूदन ।
एतस्याहं न पश्यामि चञ्चलत्वात्स्थितिं स्थिराम् ॥ ३३

Arjuna uvacha

Yo 'yam yogas tvaya proktah samyena madhusudana ।
etasya 'ham na pasyami chanchalatvat sthitim sthiram ॥ 33

अर्जुन उवाच – *Arjuna uvacha* : Arjuna said.

Meaning : मधुसूदन *madhusudana* : O Krishna, साम्येन *samyena* : attainable by equality of mind, यः अयं योगः *yah ayam yogah* : which this yoga, त्वया *tvaya* : by you, प्रोक्तः *proktah* : taught, एतस्य *etasya* : of this (yoga), स्थिराम् *sthiram* : firm, स्थितिम् *sthitim* : continuance, चञ्चलत्वात् *chanchalatvat* : on account of unsteadiness, of mind, अहम् *aham* : I, न पश्यामि *na pasyami* : am not able to see.

Substance : *Arjuna said* : O Krishna! This *Dhyanayoga* taught by you and attainable by equality of mind, I am not able to see on account of unsteadiness of mind.

Commentary : Arjuna interrupts the Lord's discourse by submitting his own incapacity to attain the *yoga* which requires equanimity of mind as the condition of its practice and achievement. Evidently Arjuna is conscious of his own inadequate power of concentration on the reality. Every common human being is in the same position as Arjuna. So his question is the question of all human beings with very rare exceptions. As it is said already, Arjuna stands as a representative of the common man, though of higher culture, in his search for truth. Unsteadiness of mind is the basic problem for all seekers. If the mind is brought to a state of firmness, any *yoga* is practicable. Otherwise nothing is possible. Arjuna opens his mind to the Lord and confesses his weakness without reservation. So should the disciple place before the *Guru* his difficulties frankly. The sick man should explain his bodily condition without reservation to the doctor. Even those secrets which he would not reveal to others should be explained to the physician. Only then can the physician prescribe the correct medicine.

By equality of mind : We understand that *Dhyanayoga* demands one-pointed concentration of the entire mind in *Atma*. Unless the hand is steady one cannot pass the thread through the eye of the needle. Unless one sits steady and motionless, no photograph can be properly taken. So the object of concentration cannot become clear unless the roving mind comes to a standstill.

The word '*Samyena*' may also be interpreted as equality of vision (*Sarvatmadrishti*) mentioned in the previous verse.

The fickle nature of the mind is described by Arjuna.

34. चञ्चलं हि मनः कृष्णप्रमाथि बलवद्दृढम् ।
तस्याहं निग्रहं मन्ये वायोरिव सुदुष्करम् ॥ ३४

Chanchalam hi manah Krishna pramathi balavaddridham ।
tasya 'ham nigraham manye vayoriva sudushkaram ॥ 34

Meaning : कृष्ण *Krishna* : O Krishna! मनः *manah* : mind, चञ्चलम् हि *chanchalam hi* : restless verily, प्रमाथि *pramathi* :

turbulent, बलवत् *balavad :* strong, दृढम् हि *dhridham hi :* verily unyielding, तस्य *tasya :* of it (mind), निग्रहम् *nigraham:* control, वायोः इव *vayoh iva :* as the wind, सुदुष्करम् *suaushkaram:* very difficult, अहम् *aham :* I, मन्ये *manye :* think.

Substance : O Krishna ! Verily, restless is the mind, turbulent, straying and unyielding, and I think it is as difficult to control it as the wind.

Commentary : *Yoga* (Union with *Atma*) is possible only when the mind is steady. But the mind is most infirm and unsteady. The body and senses are harassed continuously by its restlessness. Peace is practically impossible when the heart is churned by the mind like the milky ocean by the *Mandara* mountain. Having fed and strengthened itself on worldly things for several births, it has acquired great power and defies all attempts to bring it under control. The nature of the mind is described here by four attributes. It is restless, turbulent, strong and unyielding. Every man knows the vagaries of the mind. The elders compare it to a monkey, drunk and stung by a scorpion. Those who practice meditation know how the mind rebels and defies discipline. Arjuna compares it to the wind.

It is strong and cannot be held or directed as one wishes. '*Sudushkaram*' is the word used by Arjuna, meaning that it is very difficult to control the mind.

Question : *What is the nature of the mind ?*

Answer : It is restless, turbulent, strong and obstinate.

The Lord explains the method of control.

श्री भगवानुवाच

35\. असंशयं महाबाहो मनो दुर्निग्रहं चलम् ।
अभ्यासेन तु कौन्तेय वैराग्येण च गृह्यते ॥ ३५

Sri Bhagavan uvacha

Asamsayam mahabaho mano durnigraham chalam ।
abhyasena tu kaunteya vairagyena cha grihyate ॥ 35

श्री भगवानुवाच–*Sri Bhagavanuvacha :* The Blessed Lord said.

Meaning : महाबाहो *mahabaho :* O mighty–armed Arjuna ! मनः *mahah :* mind, दुर्निग्रहम् *durnigraham :* difficult to restrain, चलम् *chalam :* restless, असंशयम् *asamsayam :* doubtless, कौन्तेय *Kaunteya :* O Arjuna ! अभ्यासेन तु *abhyasena tu :* But by practice, वैराग्येण *vairagyena cha :* and by dispassion, गृह्यते *grihyate :* (mind) is controlled.

Substance : O Arjuna ! Doubtless the mind is restless and difficult to restrain, but by practice and dispassion it is controlled.

Commentary : The Lord accepts here that the task of restraining the mind is very difficult because of its restless nature. But there is no need to despair. It can be controlled by practice and dispassion. The great teachers point out that there are ways and means of overcoming the difficulties in the control of the mind. The Lord while admitting the mind's restlessness, encourages Arjuna that there is a way to control it, and the way is practice and dispassion. One need not fear the strength of an enemy, provided he arms himself with a mightier weapon. What if the elephant is strong, it is enough if one holds the iron rod. Lions and tigers are strong, but what of it? A power–ful gun is enough to overpower them. Thus the Lord wants his disciple not to become panicky and submit to the *tyranny* of the mind. Though difficult, it is not impossible. it Is not difficult to conquer Mount Everest ? And yet man has set his foot on the snowy peak. Is it not difficult to land on the moon? And yet man stepped on the moon. The achievements of man prove that things difficult are not things impossible of attainment. So the nature of the mind, be it what it is, is not impossible to overcome.

This part of the *Gita* is of the greatest importance for all those who wish to tread the spiritual path. Enslaved by which man from time immemorial is undergoing torments of earthly existence, that which has been the cause of the endless series of births and deaths, that which stands as the mighty barrier.

between man and the realisation of his real Self-the mind and its conquest are explained here by the Lord. The inspiring message of the Lord should encourage every seeker to gird up his loins and pull himself together for the conquest of the apparently impossible obstacle on his way to spiritual glory.

The Lord answers that the mind can be controlled by (1) practice (*abhyasa*), and (2) dispassion (*vairagya*). Patanjali also expressed the same view.

Dispassion (*Vairagya*) means a loathful attitude to the objective world arising out of a knowledge of its short-lived, painful and foul nature. Why should man seek for illusory painful pleasures, when there is eternal *Brahmananda* awaiting him as his birth-right? Human life is short and splits like a bubble. Why should man undergo all the ills and pains of life when perennial joy is his divine inheritance? Why should he yield to the temptations of wealth and luxury, when he knows that they are the very source of fear and suffering? All men long for peace. All men know that peace is not to be found anywhere in the outside world, and cannot be purchased by the weight of gold or height of position. Man really seeks for a purer joy and higher peace. To give up the lower pleasures is easy enough, if the aim of the higher life is strong and convincing.

In the world everything causes fear, and in dispassion alone is fearlessness. When dispassion develops, the mind immediately stops thinking of the external world and it is immediately drawn into the Self. The joy of *vairagya* is real, unobstructed and perennial, because it is the joy of the Self, pure and uncontaminated.

Practice (*Abhyasa*) is the key-note of the Lord's message for all spiritual aspirants. The baby learns to walk by practice, the child learns to read and write by practice, the architect, the painter, the poet, the musician, the sportsman, the athelete-men of all professions acquire perfection by practice. Where practice is less, the achievement is also less. Idleness wins

nothing, and on the spiritual path idleness is the greatest enemy. All worldly gains have been acquired by hard work and constant application. The man who feels shy of labour remains where he is. Men of ordinary talents have risen in life by systematic practice in their professions or skill. That being so, is not practice necessary for attaining the highest *Brahmananda*? Therefore 'practice' says the Lord.

Dispassion aids spiritual *sadhana*, and practice aids to strengthen dispassion. The body and the mind function by habit. If the habits are bad, man ruins himself, if the habits are good, man saves himself. So one should practise and develop good habits. If a man is accustomed to visit a wine bar at a particular time in the day, at that exact hour, the body and mind run for the bottle and nothing can stop him. In the same way, if a man practises meditation at a particular time for a particular period, the body and mind run for it, and nothing can stop him. It is practice. When it is performed systematically and regularly, it becomes automatic, and afterwards no effort is needed to coax the mind and body to do it. As meditation becomes deeper and deeper, the joy felt at that time is so precious that man does not care to think of anything else. He is absorbed in it. So 'practise' says the Lord.

Arjuna is here addressed as mighty-armed (*Mahabaho*). Arjuna is a mighty warrior, a great hero and the Lord suggests that he should be able to control the mind without fear and despondency.

Question : *What is the nature of the mind?*

Answer : It is unsteady and difficult to control.

Question : *What is the way to control it?*

Answer : Practice and dispassion.

The need for mind-control is emphasised.

36. असंयतात्मना योगो दुष्प्राप इति मे मतिः ।
वश्यात्मना तु यतता शक्योऽवाप्तुमुपायतः ॥ ३६

Asamyatatmana yogo dushprapa iti me matih ।
vasyatmana tu yatata sakyo 'vaptumupayatah ॥ 36

Meaning : असंयतात्मनः *asamyatatmanah* : by him whose mind is not controlled, योगः *yogah* : yoga (union with Self), दुष्प्रापः *dushprapah* : not attainable, इति *iti* : thus, मे *me* : My, मतिः *matih* : idea, वश्यात्मना तु यतता *vasyatmana tu yatata* : but by one of self-control striving, उपायतः *upayatah* : skilfully, अवाप्तुम् *Avaptum* : to obtain, शक्यः *sakyah* : (yoga) is possible.

Substance : It is my idea that *yoga* is not attainable by one whose mind is not controlled; but by one who strives skilfully with controlled mind, *yoga* is possible.

Commentary : The Lord makes it clear that without self-control union with *Atma* is impossible. Only the sage of controlled mind can attain the supreme Being. Whoever desires the highest should control the mind by every means available to him according to his mental predisposition. The mind should let go the fatal embrace in which man is held by the objective world. The bonds should be loosened. Whether it is by discrimination or devotion, by study of the *sastras*, by the teaching of the *Guru*, by personal experience, by observation of other peopl's lives, in some way or other, the mind should detach itself from the kind of bondage to the external world. Only then, will it be able to turn inwards to look into its own source, the *Atma*, and *yoga* becomes possible.

The Lord has already declared that by practice and dispassion the mind could be controlled. Here again by using the word 'striving' (*yatata*), he is emphasising the need for practice. The weak, the dull, the idle, the negligent can never hope to achieve anything even in worldly matters, much less in spiritual life. Sincere and steady practice is absolutely necessary. The Lord here gives another important idea – 'skilful proceeding' (*Upayatah*). One should be clever and skilful in dealing with the mind. Mere dry discipline may not yield good results. Firmness may not always succeed, and so skill becomes necessary in dealing with a powerful enemy. One should be a good strategist

in spiritual life also. The great commanders advance or withdraw their forces for strategical reasons, and gain ultimate victory. So one should deal with the mind as a deadly foe who should be conquered by firm action or by force or skill. The seeker should have only one aim and that is to understand the peculiar propensity of his own mind, and get it to a state of restfulness in whatever way he considers best.

Let people have faith in the words of the Lord. Let there be no doubt about the success in the attempt, as the Lord is with the aspirant in this holy attempt. By His Grace, discrimination and dispassion will certainly be attained by the *Sadhaka* and self-realisation will be rendered possible for every seeker even in this life.

Question : *Who can attain yoga?*

Answer : The man of self-control who strives skilfully attains *yoga*. For others it is not possible.

Arjuna's doubt about the future of the yogi who dies before attaining the goal.

अर्जुन उवाच

37. अयतिः श्रद्धयोपेतो योगाच्चलितमानसः ।

अप्राप्य योगसंसिद्धिं कां गतिं कृष्ण गच्छति ॥

Arjuna uvacha

Ayatih sraddhayo 'peto yogachalitamanasah ।
aprapya yogasamsiddhim kam gatim krishna gacchati ॥ 37

अर्जुन उवाच – *Arjuna uvacha*–Arjuna said,

Meaning : कृष्ण *Krishna* : O Krishna! श्रद्धया *sraddhaya* : with faith, उपेतः *upetah* : possessed, अयतिः *ayatih* : uncontrolled, योगात् *yogat* : from yoga, चलितमानसः *chalitamanasah* : having fallen away in mind, योगसंसिद्धिम् *yogasamsiddhim* : perfection in yoga, अप्राप्य *aprapya* : not having attained, काम् गतिम् *kam gatim* : what end, गच्छति *gacchati* : meet.

Substance : Arjuna said : Though possessing faith, yet uncontrolled, what end does the *yogi* whose mind falls away from *yoga*, meet ?

Commentary : Another doubt, quite natural to all the aspirants, crops up in Arjuna's mind. He presents the case of an aspirant who has faith in the *Guru's* teaching, who is practising self-control, but who passes away before perfection is gained in *yoga*. What will happen to that man ? Where does he go ? Has he any future, or should he start everything afresh ? Will all his struggle and effort go to waste ? This is a very natural doubt, for, most of the aspirants have a deep-seated doubt that they may not be able to attain perfection in this life. Very rarely do we come across the intense type of *yogi* who is determined to get the highest even in this life. So from the point of view of the vast majority of seekers, Arjuna's question has an undisputed relevancy.

Question : *What is Arjuna's question ?*

Answer : The aspirant possessing faith, yet failing to attain perfection in *yoga*, what will happen to him when he dies ?

38. कच्चिन्नोभयविभ्रष्टश्छिन्नाभ्रमिव नश्यति ।
अप्रतिष्ठो महाबाहो विमूढो ब्रह्मणः पथि ॥ ३८

Kacchinno'bhayavibhrastas chinnabhramiva nasyati ।
apratistho mahabaho vimudho brahmanah pathi ॥ 38

Meaning : महाबाहो *Mahabaho :* O Krishna ! ब्रह्मणः पथि *brahmanah pathi :* in the way of Brahman, अप्रतिष्ठः *aprathishthah :* not established in yoga, विमूढः *vimudhah :* deluded, उभयविभ्रष्टः *ubhayavibhrashtah :* fallen from both, छिन्नाभ्रमिव *cchinnabhramiva :* like a rent cloud, न नश्यति कच्चित् *nasyati kacchit :* not perishes, is it that.

Substance : O Krishna ! Not established in *Yoga*, and deluded in the path of *Brahman*, does he not perish like a rent cloud, fallen from both ?

Commentary : 'Fallen from both' - Both may interpreted as *Svarga* and *Moksha*, or differenily as *Karma* and *Dhyana.* Arjuna's question is relevent from the stand point of all the aspirants. They have given up all worldly things on the one side, and on the other they have not attained *Moksha.* So, apparently such a man has lost both the worlds. Having given up *Vedic* rites and rituals, he cannot go to *Svarga* and having failed in *Yoga*, he cannot attain *Moksha.* Again it is loosing both the worlds.

The simile 'rent cloud' is appropriate, for no one can trace the existence of the cloud when it is dispersed in the sky. It is lost. Will the *Yogi* who dies imperfect, perish like the cloud and go to nothing ? - is Arjuna's Question.

Arjuna appeals to the Lord to enlighten him.

39. एतन्मे संशयं कृष्ण छेत्तुमर्हस्यशेषतः ।
त्वदन्यः संशयस्यास्य छेत्ता न ह्युपपद्यते ॥ ३९

Etan me samsayam krishna chettumarhasyaseshatah ।
tvadanyah samsayasya 'sya chetta na hyupapadyate ॥ 39

Meaning : कृष्ण *Krishna :* O Krishna ! मे *me :* my, एतत् *etat :* this, संशयम् *samsayam :* doubt, अशेषतः *Aseshatah :* completely, छेत्तुम् *cchettam :* to dispel, अर्हसि *arhasi :* (you) ought to, अस्य *asya :* of this, संशयस्य *samsayasya :* doubt, छेत्ता *chetta :* dispeller, त्वदन्यः *tvadanyah :* other than you, न उपपद्यते हि *na upapadyate hi :* I cannot get indeed.

Substance : O Krishna ? You ought to dispel my doubt completely; I cannot get indeed another like you fit to clear it.

Commentary : Arjuna reveals his deep faith and devotion to the Lord in this verse. Arjuna's humility is exemplary. He speaks in the true spirit of a disciple seeking for enlightenment from a great master. Pride and arrogance are utterly objectionable in the presence of God, *Guru*, and elders. Lord

Krishna is Himself the Supreme *Paramatma*; He is omniscient. He alone knows the past, present and future of all beings in all the worlds. So He alone is fit to clear Arjuna's doubt–about the future of the imperfect *Yogi*. Arjuna appeals to the Lord that except He there is no one to dispel his doubt.

The Lord's answer ;

श्री भगवानुवाच

40. पार्थ नैवेह नामुत्र विनाशस्तस्य विद्यते ।
न हि कल्याणकृत्कश्चिद्दुर्गतिं तात गच्छति ॥ ४०

Sre Bhagavan uvacha

Partha nai 've 'ha na 'mutra vinasas tasya vidyate ।
na hi kalyanakrit kaschiddurgatim tata gacchati ॥ 40

श्री भगवानुवाच–*Sri Bhagavan uvacha* : The Blessed Lord Said,–

Meaning : पार्थ *Partha* : O Arjuna ! **तस्य** ***tasya*** : to him, इह *iha* : in this world, विनाशः *vinasah* : destruction, विद्यते न एव *vidyate na eva* : verily is not, अमुत्र न *amutra na* : nor in the next world, तात *tata* : O My son ! कल्याणकृत् *kalyanakrit* : who does good, कश्चित् न *kaschit na* : any one not indeed, दुर्गतिम् *durgatim* : bad state, न गच्छति हि *na gacchati hi* : goes not indeed.

Substance : O Arjuna ! Neither in this world, nor in the next is there destruction for him; O my son ! Never indeed any one who does good ever comes to grief or bad state.

Commentary : The Lord blesses all those who are engaged in good work. Though the aspirant fails to achieve perfection, yet he does not suffer destruction either in this world or in the next. That is the Lord's promise to all seekers. It is like life-giving elixir to all people who are doing good in some form or other. People may doubt whether any good comes to them by being and doing good. In fact, to the ignorant, the world presents the curious spectacle of bad people enjoying more

material comforts than the good and the righteous. But a closer look into the facts of life show that the wicked and the evil-minded are daily undergoing destruction in their own heart of hearts, and they shall be hurled into lower and lower planes of existence. The good live and thrive in the sun-shine of God's grace, though material riches they may not possess. They need have no doubt about their present or future because the Lord here declares that they will never come to a bad state. Let this promise of the Lord be remembered, whenever doubt or fear enters one's heart.

"Do good, your future is assured." This is the Lord's call to all seekers. Though Arjuna's question pertains to the votaries of *Dhyanayoga*, the Lord gives a general answer which embraces all those who are working on the spiritual path in different ways. So the general term (*Kalyana krit*) (Who does good) is used. It is implied that the evil-doers shall suffer a terrible doom here and here-after. So let nobody indulge in sinful activities. The Lord gives the hope that whatever is left undone by the seeker shall be completed by him in a latter life to come.

The Lord addresses his diciple in the most endearing term as 'O my son' (*Tata*). The Lord has a paternal attitude towards all *sadhakas*, and will always take care of them here and here–after. The love and compassion of the Lord for the devotee is revealed here.

Question : *What is the future of Yogabhrashta?*

Answer : He shall not perish either in this world or in the next. He will attain what is good.

Question : *What is Lord's view about the good ?*

Answer : Whoever does good will never come to woeful end.

The future life of the Yogabhrashta is explained.

42. प्राप्य पुण्यकृतां लोकानुषित्वा शाश्वतीः समाः ।
शुचीनां श्रीमतां गेहे योगभ्रष्टोऽभिजायते ॥ ४१

Prapya punyakritam lokan ushitva sasvatih samah ।
suchinam srimatam gehe yogabhrasto 'bhijayate ॥ 41

Meaning : योगभ्रष्टः *yogabhrastah* : one who has fallen from yoga, पुण्यकृतान् *punyakritan* : attainable by the good, लोकान् *Lokan* : worlds, प्राप्य *prapya* : having attained, शाश्वतीः *saswatih* : many, समाः *samah* : years, उषित्वा *ushitwa* : having lived there, शुचीनां *suchinam* : of the pure, श्रीमतां *srimatam* : of the wealthy, गेहे *gehe* : in the house, अभिजायते *abhijayate*: he is born.

Substance : The *yogi* fallen from *yoga* attains to the worlds of the good, and having lived there many years is born in the house of the pure and prosperous.

Commentary : The Lord traces the life-course of *sadhakas* who die without attaining perfection in *yoga*. They go to the worlds of the good, live there for many years, and then they take birth in a pure and prosperous home. They take up the thread of *sadhana* that was snapped by death in the middle. They enjoy life in the highest worlds, and when they come to the earth again, they are prosperous. Let it not be misunderstood that they revel in gold and destroy themselves by abusing their wealth. The Lord states '*Suchinam*' (of the pure) first, and next '*Srimatam*' (of the wealthy). Purity first and prosperity next. They do not suffer the pains of poverty and at the same time their home is full of sanctity and purity. Such a spiritual home, free from the torments of poverty, is most congenial for *sadhana*. If he is poor he has to fritter away part of his life and energy for eking out his livelihood. If he is wealthy, he may lose himself in material pleasures. Pure and prosperous homes provide the best training ground for spiritual practice. If however, one is asked to choose between the two, he has to choose the pure in preference to the wealthy.

The theory of re-incarnation (*Punarjanma*) has already been stated in the second Discourse. Verses like '*Dehino*' '*smin yathadehe*' etc. and here '*Prapya punyakritam lokan* etc.' prove that there is a continuity in the life of man from birth to birth.

Question : *What is the state of the Yogabrashta after death* ?

Answer : He goes to the higher worlds, and after enjoying there for many years, is reborn in a pure and prosperous home. He continues the *sadhana* from the point where he left in his previous life.

The future of the dedicated yogi is explained.

42. अथवा योगिनामेव कुले भवति धीमताम् ।
एतद्धि दुर्लभतरं लोके जन्म यदीदृशम् ॥ ४२

Athava yoginameva kule bhavati dhimatam ।
etaddhi durlabhataram loke janma yadidrisam ॥ 42

Meaning : अथवा *athava* : or, धीमताम् *dhimatam* : of the wise, योगिनाम् *yoginam* : of yogis, कुले एव *kule eva*: in the family only, भवति *bhavati* : is born, ईदृशम् *idrisam* : this kind of, जन्म *janma* : birth, यत् *yat* : what (is), एतत् हि *etat hi* : that (birth) indeed, लोके *loke* : in this world, दुर्लभतरं *durlabhataram* : more difficult.

Substance : Or he born in the family of the wise *yogis*. This kind of birth is indeed very difficult to attain.

Commentary : The verse refers to aspirants who have reached higher levels of *yoga*. They are superior to the common *yogabhrashta*. And hence, they are born in the family of the wise *yogis*. Such a birth, says the Lord is very difficult to attain, because they are men of knowledge having reached the Atmic state, and being born as children of the wise provides the best opportunity for self-realisation. We find that mighty spiritual men were born to parents who had done a great 'tapas'. The atmosphere in such homes is saturated with divine fragrance. They breathe the atmosphere and feel the very presence of God. What more does the aspirant require to complete his *yoga* and attain perfection ?

People wish to be born in the lineage of kings, princes and millionaires. Of what avail is it except to get further entangled in the meshes of *Maya*, and suffer the inevitable penalties of earthly life? The wise man desires to be born in the line of *yogis*, so that he could attain perfection in the shortest possible time. The Lord declares here that birth in the family of *yogis* is very difficult to attain (*durlabhataram*).

Question : *What is the future of the yogi of high calibre ?*

Answer : He is born in the family of the *yogis*. The idea is that even from childhood he practises *yoga* and attain perfection more easily and more quickly than others.

Question : *What is the best birth for an individual ?*

Answer : Birth in the family of *Jnanis* and *Yogis* is the best.

The Lord explains how he would live and What he would do, being born in the family of yogis.

43. तत्र तं बुद्धिसंयोगं लभते पौर्वदेहिकम् ।
यतते च ततो भूयः संसिद्धौ कुरुनन्दन ॥ ४३

Tatra tam buddhi samyogam labhate paurva daihikam ।
yatate cha tato bhuyah samsiddhau kuru nandana ॥ 43

Meaning : कुरुनन्दन *Kurunandana :* O Arjuna ! तत्र *tatra :* there (in the family of the yogi), पौर्वदेहिकम् *paurva daihikam :* pertaining to previous birth, तम् *tam :* that, बुद्धिसंयोगम् *buddhi-samyogam :* contact with the yogic intellect, लभते *labhate :* gets, ततः *tatah :* by that, भूयः *bhuyah :* again, संसिद्धौ *samsiddhau :* for perfection in yoga, यतते च *yatate cha :* and (he) strives.

Substance : O Arjuna ! Being born in the family of *yogis,* he gets the *yogic* intellect transmitted from his previous birth, and again strives for perfection in *yoga.*

Commentary : The theory of re-incarnation is explained in greater detail here. Though the body is dead and gone, yet the mind, with all the impressions acquired in previous births, live on, and when the *Jiva* takes another body, the former mental endowment comes to him. So he continues the *sadhana* exactly from the point where it came to an end when the body fell. Nothing is lost in death except the fleshy tabernacle. There is a continuity from birth to birth, and the chain continues till the moment when liberation is attained, and the mind with all its *samskaras* is detroyed. This view of rebirth is the only possible explanation for the disparity in the mental make-up of different individuals as we see them. The good thoughts, feelings, and actions of the past create a natural propensity for good things in this life. Even so, the bad thoughts and deeds done in the past produce a natural inclination to evil in this life. So, it is a warning to all to be careful of what force they are generating at the present moment. They should realise that they are accumulating *samskaras* and giving a special direction to their future life by their thoughts and actions at the present moment. Let no one complain that he is bad because society or circumstances made him bad. He has himself created the bad in and around him, and he should shoulder full responsibility for what he is in the present birth. He is the maker of his own destiny. He reaps what he sows.

From this we understand that good and bad, knowledge and ignorance follow every being like his shadow from birth to birth. When the entire *karma* is destroyed in the fire of *Jnana*, then there is no more any shadow because there is no more any separate individual as such. So, even before the body falls, man should enlighten his intellect and give it perfect knowledge. By several kinds of spiritual practices, he should instil divine tendencies. Those alone follow man after death. All other things, the dearest and the most precious are left beind. The wise man should therefore purify the subtle body and instil divine flavour and knowledge. As nothing that is done goes to waste, the little *japa, tapas,* knowledge. *Dana* and *Dharma,* will bear fruit in the next life and make the spiritual journey easier and quicker.

Question: *Being born in the family of yogis what should man do?*

Answer : He should complete and bring to perfection the *yogic* practice which he kept unfinished in the previous birth.

Question : *How does he acquire yogic samskara from the moment of birth?*

Answer : His past *sadhana* preserved in the mind is reborn with him, and so he obtains it as his natural endowment.

The power of the yogic samskara is stated.

44. पूर्वाभ्यासेन तेनैव ह्रियते ह्यवशोऽपि सः ।
जिज्ञासुरपि योगस्य शब्दब्रह्मातिवर्तते ॥ ४४

Purvabhyasena tena 'va hriyate hyavaso 'pi sah ।
jignasurapi yogasya sabdabrahma'tivartate ॥ 44

Meaning : सः *sah* : he, अवशःअपि *avasah api* : even without his volition, तेन *tena* : by that, पूर्वाभ्यासेन एव *purvabhyasena eva* : by former practice verily, ह्रियते हि *hriyate hi* : is drawn (to yoga) indeed, योगस्य *yogasya* : of yoga, जिज्ञासुरपि *jignanasuh api* : though desirous of knowledge, शब्दब्रह्म *sabdabrahma* : the Vedas (the fruits of Vedic rites and rituals), अतिवर्तते *ativartate* : (he) transcends.

Substance By the force of practice in the previous birth, he is drawn to *yoga* without his volition. Though desirous only of the Knowledge of *yoga* he transcends the *Karma Kanda* of the *Vedas*.

Commentary : From this we understand the force of *samskaras* acquired in previous births. Even without any volition on his part, he is drawn to *yoga*. This is due to the mysterious power of nature acting through past experience. As the fish takes to water, as the bird takes to the air, he, the *yogabhrashta* takes to *yoga*. Past thoughts and habits of life, whatever they may be, fulfil themselves in the present birth.

We come across persons who are born with *vairagya*, whom no temptations can draw down into the mire of *samsara*. Just so, we find persons steeped in *samsara* in spite of all the disasters and calamities of life. So, past *yogic* practice drives him to take to *yoga* without his being aware of any special effort on his part. He cannot remain idle. It is the duty of all seekers to do as much of spiritual *sadhana* as he can, so that when he takes a new birth he can rise to higher and higher planes of Self-realisation.

The second line of the verse reveals the transcendental power of *yoga* (union with Self). Even by thinking of the law of *yoga*, he transcends all the *Vedic* lore and *sastric* leaning, and directly rises to the supreme state. Here '*Sabdabrahma*' may mean either the fruits of *Vedic* rites and rituals, or indirect knowledge arising from the study of the *sastras*. From this we understand the power of *yoga* which leads to union with *Brahman*. If by merely thinking of *yoga* he can transcend the lower level, what reward he would get by actual practice can be imagined.

Question : *How does the yogabhrashta take to yoga?*

Answer : He is drawn to it even without his volition by the power of past experience.

Question : *What is the excellence of yoga?*

Answer : It enables him to rise above all *sastras* and *Vedic lore*.

The Yogabhrashta attains Moksha by the continuity of yogic practice.

45. प्रयत्नाद्यतमानस्तु योगी संशुद्धकिल्बिषः ।
अनेकजन्मसंसिद्धस्ततो याति परां गतिम् ॥ ४५

Prayatnad yatamanastu yogi samsuddhakilbishah ।
aneka janma samsiddhastato yati param gatim ॥ 45

Meaning : प्रयत्नात् *prayatnat* : assiduously, यतमानः *yatamanah* : striving, योगी तु *yogitu* : but the yogi, संशुद्धकिल्बिषः *samsuddhakilbishah* : purified of all sins,

अनेकजन्मसंसिद्धः *anekajanmasamsiddhah* : perfected through many births, ततः *tatah* : then, परां *param* : supreme, गतिम् *gatim* : state (Moksha), याति *yati* : attains.

Substance : Practising assiduously, the *yogi* having acquired perfection through many births attains the supreme state (*Moksha*) purified of all sins.

Commentary : The *yogi* reaches the highest state by assiduous practice through several births. Three factors are mentioned here - (1) Assiduous striving, (2) Continued practice, (3) Purity.

The weak and the cowards cannot reach the goal. "The weak cannot realise *Atma*. The heroic man realises the Supreme self" - Thus the *Upanishads* declare that strength and courage are essential for spiritual realisation.

If the *yogi* acquires such strength, courage, and perseverence in *yoga*, it is the result of continued practice through several births. Birth as man, desire for liberation, are the reward of good work done in the past. It does not mean that one has to wait for a long series of births to attain freedom. No. It can be achieved even in this birth, nay even in this hour, if the will is strong and the effort adequate. When the Lord speaks of several births, it is only to emphasise that the good work done in the past never goes to waste. He does not want man to postpone the glorious consummation even by a second. Since no one knows what he has done in the past, let him have faith that the best would bear fruit now and take him to the highest state.

Purity of mind has been mentioned as essential for Self-realisation in many places in the *Gita*. By *Nishkama Karma*, devotion, discrimination, and knowledge, man should purify his inner self, before he could experience any spiritual enlightenment.

Supreme state : *Moksha* is the highest state. There is nothing higher than that, because it is the state of absolute

freedom. All other states are conditioned by time, place and other limiting adjuncts. *Moksha* is beyond all relative values. The law of causation which binds every thing is transcended by the *yogi*, when he reaches the highest state. Freedom is the birth-right of man, the one urge prompting him in all that he does, though he is not conscious of it. *Yoga* is the direct path o freedom.

Question : *What is the highest state ?*

Answer : Self-realisation, *Moksha* ?

Question: *How does man attain it ?*

Answer : By continued practice, ardent striving, and purity man realises the supreme state.

The superiority of the yogi is declared.

46. तपस्विभ्योऽधिको योगी ज्ञानिभ्योऽपि मतोऽधिकः ।
कर्मिभ्यश्चाधिको योगी तस्माद्योगी भवार्जुन ॥ ४६

Tapasvibhyo 'dhiko yogi jnanibhyo 'pi mato 'dhikah ।
karmibhyascha 'dhiko yogi tasmad yogi bhava 'rjuna ॥ 46

Meaning : अर्जुन *Arjuna* : O Arjuna ! योगी *yogi* : the yogi, तपस्विभ्यः *tapasvibhyah* : than ascetics, अधिकः *adhikah* : greater, ज्ञानिभ्यः अपि *jnanibhyah api* : than even the learned, अधिकः *adhikah*: greater, मतः *matah*: is thought, योगी *yogi*: yogi, कर्मिभ्यः च *karmibhyah cha* : than men of action and, अधिकः *adhikhah* : greater, तस्मात् *tasmat* : therefore, योगी *yogi* : yogi, भव *bhava* : be.

Substance : O Arjuna ! The *yogi* is thought to be greater than the ascetic, greater than the learned, and greater than the man of action; therefore be a *yogi*.

Commentary : The superiority of *Dhyana yoga* is declared here. It is superior to ascetic practices mentioned in the *Vedas* like fasting etc. It is superior to knowledge acquired from the

study of *sastras*. It is superior to works mentioned in *Vedic Karmakanda*, like the worship of the sacred Fire etc. That is, meditation on *Atma* is superior to knowledge acquired through the study of the *sastras*. The knowledge attained in *Dhyana* is direct and conclusive since the aim of spiritual *sadhana* is Self-realisation. Whatever brings the aspirant directly into contact with *Atma*, and lifts him to that plane, should be considered superior. *Dhyana* has that power of taking the *yogi* nearer and nearer to *Atma*.

Be thou a yogi : This is the Lord's command to Arjuna. Having explained the process and excellence of *yoga*, the Lord commands his disciple to train himself as a *yogi*. The convincing arguments behind the command show how the *Gita* follows the rational path of judging first and decision next. Every thing is examined on its own merits, and conclusions are drawn after through understanding of the subject. So it is not blind faith that the Lord is expecting from his disciple. It is faith born of knowledge, judgment and decision. The command applies to all people who are awakened from the delusion of life, and who are eager to overcome the infinite ills of life by knowing the truth. '*Yoga*' and '*Bhoga*' are both open to man. The one who chooses the first rises to the supreme state. The one who chooses the latter gets stuck up in the bog of *samsara*. Therefore one should strive to be a *yogi* and not a *bhogi*. He is not a *yogi* who merely puts on the ochre robes. He is a *yogi* who has withdrawn his mind from sense-pleasures, who keeps the senses under control, who looks inwards into the Self and there comes to rest in peace. All human beings are qualified for this noble and grand aim.

Question : *What is the superiority of a yogi ?*

Answer : He is superior to ascetics, to men of *sastraic* learning and to those who are engaged in performing the *Vedic* rites and rituals.

Question : *What is Lord's command ?*

Answer : Be a *yogi* is the Lord's command.

The Lord states whom he considers the best of yogis.

47. योगिनामपि सर्वेषां मद्गतेनान्तरात्मना ।
श्रद्धावान्भजते यो मां स मे युक्ततमो मतः ॥ ४७

Yoginamapi sarvesham madgatena 'ntaratmana ।
sraddhavan bhajate yo mam sa me yuktatamo matah ॥ 47

Meaning : सर्वेषां *sarvesham:* of all, योगिनाम् अपि *yoginam api:* yogis even, यः *yah :* who, मद्गतेन *madgatena :* fixed in Me, अन्तरात्मना *antaratmana :* with mind, श्रद्धावान् *sraddhavan :* with faith, माम् *mam:* Me, भजते *bhajate:* worship, सः *sah :* he, युक्ततमः *yuktatamah :* most devout, मे मतः *Me matah :* by Me is deemed.

Substance : Even among all the *yogis*, he who worships Me with mind fixed in Me, full of faith, is deemed by me to be the most devout.

Commentary : In the previous verse, the superiority of the *yogi* to the ascetics, the learned men, and men of *Vedic* works is declared. In this verse, the Lord states that the *yogi* who worships Him, the Absolute, with faith, is the greatest of all *yogis*. Lord Krishna is himself the supreme in-dwelling Self of all, and so when the Lord says "Worship Me," it is taken to mean "be united with Me, the Self, the Absolute." Or from the point of view of the devotee (*Bhakta*), the Lord as the divine form of Krishna may be taken as the object of worship. In any way, the *yogi* who worships the Lord, the Absolute, is greater than those who worship the *Devas*.

The purpose of all *sadhana* is to free the mind from impure tendencies binding it to the material world. In this process, devotion to the Lord is of primary importance. It is the Lord's grace that leads men to success in any *yoga*–*Karma yoga*, *Jnana yoga* or *Dhyana Yoga*. That seed which is watered sprouts into life and grows. Devotion to God is the water that soaks the mind of the aspirant and bears fruit in the ultimate success of all his endeavours. Is the conquest of *Maya* an easy task ? What is man before the power of *Maya* ? With weak and troubled mind filled with all the filth of sensual

33)

pleasures, how can man hope to conquer *Maya*? Can he hope to do so by his own efforts? He cannot, except with the support of the Lord. The worship of the Lord is the only gaurantee of success in any *yoga*. Therefore, all great spiritual gaints who come to teach mankind have taken refuge in Him and have worked as His instruments. It is to be noted that whatever the subject of the particular Discourse, the Lord does make a reference to devotion, to remind the seeker to have faith in Him and perform his work. devotion thus forms the final note in this Discourse on *Dhyana Yoga*.

God, the Absolute, should be worshipped with faith. The Gita emphasises faith in many places. What is done without faith does not bear fruit. It is as good as not having done anything at all. Along with '*Sama*' and '*Dama*', *Sraddha* (faith) is the chief ingredient in spiritual practice.

The mind should be merged in Him. Possessing faith, the seeker should turn the mind inwards and become united with the Absolute. Such a *yogi* is most devout (*Yukta tamah*).

The Lord declares that this is His doctrine. From this we can understand the importance of faith and devotion to Him, as the foundation of all *Yogas*.

Question : *Who according to the Lord is the best of yogis?*

Answer : He who is full of faith, who worships the Lord, the Absolute, and merges his mind in Him, is the greatest of *yogis*.

इति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे
श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे आत्मसंयमयोगो नाम
षष्ठोऽध्यायः ॥

Iti Srimad Bhagavadgitasupanishatsu brahmavidyayam yogasastre Sri Krishnarjuna samvade Atmasamyama Yogo nama sas ho 'dhyayah.

Thus, in the Upanishads of the glorious Bhagavad Gita, the Science of the Eternal, the Scripture of *Yoga*, the dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna, ends the Sixth Discourse entitled *Atmasamyama Yoga*
(The *Yoga* of Self-control)

ॐ

श्री भगवद्गीता

SRI BHAGAVAD GITA

अथ सप्तमोऽध्यायः

Atha Saptamodhyayah

SEVENTH DISCOURSE

विज्ञानयोगः

VIJNANA YOGA

THE YOGA OF WISDOM

I. Title of the Discourse :

Vijnana means Knowledge through direct experience, contrasted with the understanding of the Scriptures by intellectual study. The word may also mean Knowledge of that which is to be known (i. e.) *Atma*. The Lord's command is that man should not be satisfied with mere theory but should attain direct Knowledge by personal experience. The aspirant should not only possess the qualities of a Jnani like humility and righteousness, but also knowledge of *Atma*. As this Discourse deals with such direct Knowledge derived from experience, it is entitled Vijnana Yoga.

II. Important points of the Discourse :

1. Mention of experienced knowledge. (1-3)
2. Qualities of the transcendental (*Para*) and phenomenal (*apara*) nature. (4-7)
3. Immanence of *Atma* in the entire objective world. (8-12)

4. Condemnation of demonical qualities and commendation of divine qualities, and the four types of devotees. (13–19)

5. Worship of the Gods. (20–23)

6. The nature of the ignorance and excellence of the wise who know the Supreme Lord. (24–30)

III. How this Discourse is connected with the previous one :

At the end of the previous Discourse *(Atmasamyama yoga)* the Lord declared that he is the greatest *Yogi* who worships Him, the Absolute with faith. But such faith and one-pointed concentration is possible only by knowing the nature of the Lord, His all-pervasive character, and all-including infinity. So, in this Discourse, the Lord explains the excellence, the supremacy and significance of the Self, the Absolute.

श्री भगवानुवाच

1. मय्यासक्तमनाः पार्थ योगं युञ्जन्मदाश्रयः ।
असंशयं समग्रं मां यथा ज्ञास्यसि तच्छृणु ॥ १

Sri Bhagavan Uvacha :

Mayyasaktamanah partha yogam yunjan madasrayah ।
asamsayam samagram mam yatha jnasyasi tacchrinu ॥ 1

श्री भगवानुवाच *Sri Bhagavan Uvacha :* The Blessed Lord said.

Meaning : पार्थ *partha :* O Arjuna ! मयि *mayi :* in Me, आसक्तमनाः *asaktamanah :* with mind intent, मदाश्रयः *madasrayah:* taking refuge in Me, योगम् *yogam :* Yoga, युञ्जन् *yunjan :* performing, माम् *mam :* Me, असंशयम् *asamsayam :* without doubt, समग्रम् *samagram :* wholly, यथा *yatha :* how, ज्ञास्यसि *jnasyasi :* you shall know, तत् *tat :* that, शृणु *srinu :* hear.

Substance : The Blessed Lord said; O Arjuna ! With mind absorbed in Me, taking refuge in Me, practising *yoga*, how you shall know Me wholly and doubtlessly, that hear.

Commentary : Few people are eager to know the Lord, and among those who are eager to know, only few are able to know Him in essence. Indeed, very rare are those who could know him fully and without any doubt. Three conditions are prescribed.

1) He should be attached to the Lord.

2) He should consider the Lord as His sole refuge.

3) He should practise *yoga*.

The mind is like a powerful search-light. When it is turned aside, the objective world is seen; when it is turned inwards, the Self is seen. The mind thinks only of that to which it is attached. As the ignorant man is attached to the material world, his mind rambles continuously among sense-objects and is satisfied with sense-pleasures. Such a man cannot know the Lord – *Paramatma*. The wise man, turning away from the objective world, thinks of the Reality understands the Truth, and enjoys peace and bliss. Therefore the Lord speaks of the *yogi* as one who is attached to the Lord and for whom the Lord is the sole refuge.

The *yoga* of Devotion and *Dhyana* are both aids to know the Lord, and become one with Him.

Moreover, in this verse, the doubt is cleared how the Lord is to be known. He could be known by devotion to Him, by seeking refuge in Him, and by meditating on Him.

Question : *What is the way to know the Lord ?*

Answer : Devotion, meditation, single-minded aspiration are the means of knowing the Lord.

2. ज्ञानं तेऽहं सविज्ञानमिदं वक्ष्याम्यशेषतः ।
यज्ज्ञात्वा नेह भूयोऽन्यज्ज्ञातव्यमवशिष्यते ॥ २

Jnanam te'ham savijnanamidam vakshyamyaseshatah ।
yajjnatva ne'ha bhuyo 'nyaj jnatavyamavasisyate ॥ 2

Meaning : यत् *yatah :* which, ज्ञात्वा *jnatva :* having known, इह *iha :* in this world, भूयः *bhuyah :* more, ज्ञातव्यम् *jnatavyam :*

that which is to be known, अन्यत् *anyat :* any other, न अवशिष्यते *na avasishyate :* does not exist, इदम् *idam :* this, सविज्ञानम् *savijnanam :* combined with direct experience of Atma, ज्ञानम् *jnanam :* knowledge, अशेषतः *aseshatah :* in full, ते *te :* to you, वक्ष्यामि *vakshyam :* I will tell.

Substance : Knowing which there shall not be any other to be known in this world, that Knowledge combined with experience, I will tell you.

Commentary : The Lord's love for the devotee is infinite. He wants to reveal everything to his disciple, make him understand the Supreme, so that his mind shall not wander in ignorance at any time thereafter in the world. Lord Krishna teaches Arjuna the highest wisdom associated with personal and direct experience.

There are several arts and sciences in the world. Though a man may know many or most of them, his knowledge is not complete. Something still remains to be known. But if the Lord is known, not merely by speculation or argument, but by direct experience, then man feels that there is nothing else to be known in the world.

The Lord's statement here agrees with the Upanishadic declaration. So the aim of the aspirant is not to know this or that or a hundred things, but to know that, knowing which the essence of all is fully realised. All search for knowledge ends here. There is nothing else to be known. When the base of the plant is watered, it is the same as watering the branches, blossoms, and fruits of that plant. We do not pour water on every leaf and flower. Even so, when the supreme *Brahman* is realised, all the experiences in the world are comprehended by that knowledge. When Lord Siva asked his sons Vighneswara and Kumaraswamy to go,and make a circuit of the world, Kumaraswamy took the pain of flying all the way round the world, whereas Vighneswara went round Lord Siva and received the reward of circuting the whole world as Lord Siva himself is the whole world. Even so, ***Brahmagnana*** comprehends

the knowledge of everything else. Man's life-time is short and many are the sciences and arts, and no one can hope to know them all. The best way to know them all is to know the Divine essence immanent in all of them. What is the basic truth behind the whole of the phenomenal world? That question can be answered only by self-realisation, and not by the study of any number of sciences for any length of time. Out of compassion for his friend and disciple, Lord Krishna offers him that supreme knowledge.

Here two words are used *Jnana* and *Vijnana* - *Jnana* means knowledge derived from the study of *Sastras*. It is '*Sabda-brahma*'. *Vijnana* means realisation of *Atma* i. e. '*Parabrahma*'. Supreme peace and bliss is the reward of realisation, and not of indirect knowledge born of Sastraic learning. The Lord declares that he will teach the truth fully and completely. Verily nothing is left out. Another interpretation of the words *Jnana* and *Vijnana* may also be given. *Jnana* may be understood as the quality of the *Jnana*, like humility etc. mentioned in the 13th Discourse. *Vijnana* may be taken to mean knowledge of the Supreme *Brahman*.

Rare are those who know the Lord in essence.

3. मनुष्याणां सहस्रेषु कश्चिद्यतति सिद्धये ।
यततामपि सिद्धानां कश्चिन्मां वेत्ति तत्त्वतः ॥ ३

Manushyanam sahasreshu kaschid yatati siddhaye ।
yatatamapi siddhanam kaschinmam vetti tattvatah ॥ 3

Meaning : मनुष्याणां *manushyanam :* of men, सहस्रेषु *sahasreshu :* among thousands, कश्चित् *kaschit :* some one, सिद्धये *siddhaye :* for perfection, यतति *yatati :* strives, यतताम् *yatatam :* among the striving, सिद्धानाम् अपि *siddhanam api :* of the successful ones even, कश्चित् *kaschit:* some one, माम् *mam:* Me, तत्त्वतः *tattvatah :* in essence, वेत्ति *vetti :* knows.

Substance : Among thousands of men, one strives for perfection and even among those who strive and succeed, one knows Me in essence.

Commentary : Very few people have the inclinination to know the truth. Those who enter the field of action in pursuit of their aim are indeed less in number. Among those, some rare and exceptional man attains perfection. In a running race, many are found at the starting point, but some drop off on the way, and two or three strive to reach the goal, and only one wins the race. The blossoms of a huge tree are innumerable. But only a few develop fruits. All the others drop off. Among those that bear the fruit, many fall away before the fruits become ripe. And at last we can pick only a few ripe fruits. It is the same with spiritual aspirants. Devotion, intimate contact with the Lord, is the reward of much good done through several births.

As millions are carried away in the flood of *Maya*, some one strong and heroic soul, by virtue of the good *samskara* stands firm, and strives to know the truth, and attains God.

Tattvatah: The Lord here emphasises the need for knowing Him in essence, fully and entirely. Shadowy knowledge is not enough. Distant understanding is not enough. Close and direct knowledge without any doubt or darkness should be attained for ultimate perfection.

It is not to discourage the seeker when it is said that a rare man alone can understand Him. The difficult nature of the task, and the need for firm determination and unyielding perseverance are emphasised. The seekers should understand the long distance they have to traverse to reach the destination. No one can jump to the goal. The process is slow and the path is hard. But there is always the inspiring hope that what little is achieved will not be lost, will help him to overcome great fear.

The Lord explains His phenominal and transcendental nature, and starts with the phenomenal first.

4. भूमिरापोऽनलो वायुः खं मनो बुद्धिरेव च।
अहङ्कार इतीयं मे भिन्ना प्रकृतिरष्टधा ॥ ४

Bhumir apo 'nalo vayuh kham mano buddhireva cha ।
ahamkara iti 'yam me bhinna prakrtirastadha ॥ 4

Meaning : भूमिः *bhumih :* Earth, आपः *apah ;* water, अनलः *analah :* fire, वायुः *vayuh :* air, खम् *kham :* ether, मनः *manah:* mind, बुद्धिः *buddhih :* intellect, अहंकार एवच *ahamkara eva cha:* egoism and also, इति *iti :* thus, मे *me :* My, प्रकृतिः इयम् *prakrithih iyam :* nature this, अष्टधा *ashtadha :* eightfold, भिन्ना *bhinnah :* divided.

Substance : Earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind, reason, and also egoism - these are the eightfold divisions of My nature.

Commentary : The five elements, the mind, reason and egoism together constitute the phenominal aspect of the Lord's nature. *Prakriti* (phenominal nature) is gross and so it is *Jada* (insentient). *Purusha, Atma,* or *Brahman,* is the life-principle. *Prakriti* is the objective universe (*drisya*) and *Purusha* is the seer (*drik*). *Prakriti* is liable to destruction, but *Purusha* is eternal. Mind, reason and egoism are also included in *Prakriti* along with the grosser elements. The elements are insentient and so the modifications of internal nature are also insentient. When it is known that the mind is insentient, its power and virulence are lost. It is held and controlled like any other material object. The insentient can never have power over the sentient. Those who do not know this secret come under the power of the mind and dance to its tune. So to control the mind, one should clearly distinguish between the gross and the sentient, and between that which is '*Jada*' and that which is '*Chit*'.

Question : *What are the different modifications of the Lord's phenomenal nature ?*

Answer : Earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind, reason and egoism – these constitute the inferior nature (*apara prakriti*).

The Lord explains His transcendational nature.

5. अपरेयमितस्त्वन्यां प्रकृतिं विद्धि मे पराम् ।
जीवभूतां महाबाहो ययेदं धार्यते जगत् ॥

Apare 'yam itastvanyam prakrtim viddhi me param ।
jivabhutam mahabaho yaye 'dam dharyate jagat ॥ 5

Meaning : महाबाहो *Mahabaho :* O Arjuna ! इयम् *iyam :* this nature, अपरा *apara :* (is) inferior, इतःतु *itah tu :* but from this, अन्याम् *anyam :* other : यया *yaya :* by which, इदम् जगत् *idam jagat :* this universe, धार्यते *dharyate :* is sustained, जीवभूताम् *jivabhutam :* the verylife-element, मे *me :* My, प्रकृतिम् *prakritim :* nature, पराम् *param :* superior, विद्धि *viddhi :* know.

Substance : O Arjuna! This is the inferior (described in the previous verse), Know My other nature, the Higher – *Para Prakriti*, the life-element by which the universe is upheld.

Commentary : The Lord now explains the '*Para Prakriti*' the Higher Nature. It is the life-element by which the whole universe is upheld. Even this, like the '*apara prakriti*' is under the control of the Lord, the Purusha. Let us understand the distinction between the *para* and *apara Prakriti* by means of an illustration. There is a pot filled with water, and the orb of the Sun is reflected in it. Here the pot and water are *apara prakriti*-inferior nature, and the reflected orb of the sun shining in the water is *para prakriti*, Higher nature. The pot stands for the body, the water for the mind, and the reflected sun for the individual self (ego) by which man is deluded into thinking that he is a distinct and real personality. The real sun shining in the sky is *Atma*, *Purusha*, the Lord. When the pot and water are destroyed, the sun is not at all affected by it. He shines in his own pristine glory. So the falling away of the body does not make any difference to *Atma* which is Eternal. Sankaracharya in the Viveka Chudamani explains this idea very clearly.

The wise man leaves the pot, water and the reflection, and looks at the real self-luminous Sun. So also the man of knowledge does not attach himself to the body and mind and egoism, which appears as his individual self. He takes refuge in *Atma* which is distinct from all these three, in the same way

as the Sun in the sky is absolutely separate from that which is reflected in the water.

All the changes pertain to the pot water and the reflection in it. The real Sun does not change. The pot may be big or small, the water pure or muddy. This does not affect the sun. So also the changes that take place in the body and mind of man does not affect *Atma*. The *para* and *apara prakriti* of the Lord undergoe all sorts of modifications, but the Lord, *Purusha*, is not touched by them at all. The elements (*apara prakriti*) are insentient. According to the Advaitic concept, both the *Prakritis* are unreal. What is real is *Atma*. The seeker has to give up both the lower and higher *Prakriti* in order to reach *Atma*. Of course the life element, the personality state, is superior to the gross insentient matter. But it is also a component part of nature and cannot claim the attribute of Reality. The man in a dream may be superior to the rocks and trees of the dream, but to the awakened man both the dream-man and dream world are utterly unreal. Thus we arrive at the one supreme Reality in which all this *para* and *apara Prakriti* dwell, subject to the control of the *Purusha*. Knowing that the individual ego and the world are both unreal, the seeker has to take refuge in the Supreme *Brahman*.

Question : *What is Para Prakriti ?*

Answer : It is the life-element. By it the universe is sustained It is superior to the *apara prakriti*.

The Lord declares that He distinct from Prakriti is the final cause of the Universe.

6. एतद्योनीनि भूतानि सर्वाणीत्युपधारय ।
अहं कृत्स्नस्य जगतः प्रभवः प्रलयस्तथा ॥ ६

Etad yonini bhutani sarvani'tyupadharaya ।
aham kritsnasya jagatah prabhavah pralayastatha ॥ 6

Meaning : सर्वाणि *sarvani :* all, भूतानि *bhutani :* beings, एतद्योनीनि *etadyonini :* have these two prakritis as their womb; इति *iti :* thus, उपधारय *upadharaya :* know, अहम् *aham :* I

(the Lord, Purusha), कृत्स्नस्य *kritsnasya :* of the entire, जगतः *jagatah :* universe, प्रभवः *prabhavah :* the cause of creation (through Prakriti), तथा *tatha :* in the same way, प्रलयः *pralayah:* the cause of dissolution.

Substance : Know this (*Prakriti*) to be the womb of all beings; I am the source of the outcoming of the whole universe, and like-wise the source of its dissolution.

Commentary : *Prakriti* in its two aspects, *para* and *apara*, is the womb of all beings. *Purusha* is the *Master* and cause of all creation, sustenance, and destruction of the entire universe. *Prakriti* is the instrument with which he creates, maintains, and destroys the whole universe. Therefore tracing backwards to the root cause of all things, we find that the whole manifested universe and the unmanifested, will be found to come out of *Brahman* and got dissolved in *Brahman*. The Omnipotent, Omniscient *Brahman* is the material and efficient cause of the universe. According to the Advaitic concept, the Supreme Self is just the witness of all creation and destruction and is not affected by them.

Question : *What is the source of all beings ?*

Answer : Prakriti.

Question : *Who is the ultimate cause of the entire universe ?*

Answer : The Supreme Lord, *Purusha*, is the cause of the creation and destruction of the entire universe.

The Lord is the Highest, and He is Omnipresent.

7. मत्तः परतरं नान्यत्किञ्चिदस्ति धनञ्जय ।
मयि सर्वमिदं प्रोतं सूत्रे मणिगणा इव ॥ ७

Mattah parataram na 'nyat kimchidasti dhanamjaya ।
mayi sarvamidam protam sutre manigana iva ॥ 7

Meaning : धनञ्जय *dhanamjaya :* O Arjuna ! मत्तः *mattah :* than I, परतरम् *parataram :* higher, अन्यत् *anyat :* another, किञ्चित् *kimchit :* anything, न अस्ति *na asti :* is not, does not

exist, सूत्रे *sutre :* on the thread, मणिगणाः इव *maniganah iva :* clusters of gems, like, इदम् *idam :* this, सर्वम् *sarvam :* all, मयि *mayi :* in Me, प्रोतम् *protam :* is threaded.

Substance : O Arjuna ! There is nothing what-so-ever higher than I; all this is strung on Me, as clusters of gems on a string.

Commentary : Where is God ? How does He exist ? These questions are answered in this verse. Like the string that holds together the garland of gems, the whole universe is strung on the Lord. There is no place where He is not. There is nothing what-so-ever higher than He.

The string holds the clusters of gems together, without which they fall off like disintegrated elements. Moreover, though the gems are of different shapes, sizes and colours, the string that holds them together is the same. Thus, different beings, races, classes, types of beings, different religions and creeds, and all things sentient and insentient are held together by the indwelling presence of the Lord. The naked eye could see only the gems and not the string behind. So also, the eye of the common man can see only the outer form of the universe and not the unifying existence of the Lord behind.

Any rational human being can understand the presence of the string behind the gems, though he does not see it with his naked eye. To deny the existence of the string on the ground that he cannot see it is sheer ignorance. Such talk of the unwise carries no conviction, even as the denial of the existence of the sun by a blind man. It is not the naked eye but the eye of knowledge that can perceive the Lord as the eternal substratum and sustaining power behind the universe.

He who sees the sentient in the midst of the insentient, the eternal in the midst of the perishable, the changeless in the midst of the changing, is the wise man. It is the eye of Knowledge. The *Upadhi* (i. e.) the body-vehicle is insentient. But pervading the whole universe, there is the Omniscient Lord and He could be perceived only by the eye of Knowledge. The naked eye is made to see the outer form, and recognises it by its '*nama*' and

'*rupa*'. But when the eye of knowledge is opened by the grace of the Lord, His presence is recognised every where. Then will man understand that He is the final cause of the universe, that He is in everything, creating, sustaining, and destroying everything by the power of His *Prakriti*. He who sees the body is the ignorant man, he who sees the *jiva* is the partially wise; but he who sees *Atma* is the sage.

Let the seeker take refuge in this thought that the Lord is in all, and that there is nothing other or higher than He. The illustration of the string of pearls is explained below :

Gems : objects,
String : Paramatma,
Gems of different forms and colours : } the manifold universe.

Without the string the gems do not hold together - without *Paramatma* the manifold universe cannot be sustained.

The naked eye cannot see the string - the eye of the ignorant man cannot see the basic Reality.

A deeper look discovers the string behind the gems - So also penetrating knowledge reveals the Lord.

Question : *What is the real nature of the universe ?*

Answer : There is nothing in it other than or higher than the Lord.

Question *How does the Lord maintain the universe ?*

nswer : Like the string in the gardland of gems the Lord is all - pervading and holds the universe together.

Question *How can man perceive the Lord ?*

nswer : By the purified eye of knowledge.

The Lord declares His Omnipresence in four verses.

8. रसोऽहमप्सु कौन्तेय प्रभास्मि शशिसूर्ययोः ।
प्रणवः सर्ववेदेषु शब्दः खे पौरुषं नृषु ॥ ८

Raso'hamapsu kauntey. prabha'smi sasisuryayoh ।
pranavah sarvavedeshu sabdah khe paurusham nrishu ।। 8

Meaning : कौन्तेय *Kaunteya* : O Arjuna ! अहम् *aham* : I, अप्सु *apsu* : in water, रसः *rasah* : taste, sapidity, शशिसूर्ययोः *sasisuryayoh* : in the moon and sun, प्रभा *prabha* : light, सर्ववेदेषु *sarvavedeshu* : in all Vedas, प्रणवः *pranavah* : the syllable OM, खे *khe* : in ether, शब्दः *sabdah* : sound, नृषु *nrishu* : in men, पौरुषम् *paurusham* : virility, अस्मि *asmi*: am.

Substance : O Arjuna ! I am the sapidity in waters; I am the radiance of the moon and sun; I am the syllable OM in all *Vedas*; I am sound in ether; I am virility in men.

Commentary : In the previous verse, it is declared that the Lord is present in the whole universe, like the string in the garland of gems. To show this truth, the Lord takes certain objects and explains how He is present in them. He is in the form of taste in water, light in the sun and the moon, *Pranava* (OM) in the *Vedas*, and virility in men. Thus His presence is to be realised in all things. Taste and water, light and the sun, are inseparable. There is light where there is sun. We cannot conceive the sun without his light. Since it is difficult to conceive the universal presence of the Lord in the beginning, He illustrates the idea with reference to certain objects.

He is the syllable OM in all the *Vedas*. The essence of the *Vedas* is to be found in OM. No man can possibly study all the *Vedas* completely. Human life is too short for that purpose. So, if the syllable OM is understood and contemplated, man obtains the very essence of all the *Vedas* and fulfills his life. So repeating the syllable OM, contemplating the meaning of that sacred sound, thinking of the Lord as *Pranava*, man attains the highest.

The Lord is virility in men. Virility, strength, courage and determination are all divine qualities. Timidity, weakness, dullness are all unmanly qualities. We see the Lord Himself when we come across bold and courageous men, who readily sacrifice their life for a righteous cause. We see the Lord in the

great sages and *Rishis*, who have overcome insuperable obstacles with courage and determination. The supreme manifestation of the Lord is magnificiently described in the Ninth Discourse. The seeker should cultivate courage, enthusiasm, strength and resolution in his spiritual life.

Question : *How does the Lord explain His presence in the Universe.*

Answer : He is taste in water, light in the sun and moon, OM in the *Vedas*, sound in Ether, and virility in men.

9. पुण्यो गन्धः पृथिव्यां च तेजश्चास्मि विभावसौ ।
जीवनं सर्वभूतेषु तपश्चास्मि तपस्विषु ॥ ९

Punyo gandhah prithivyam cha tejascha 'smi vibhavasau
jivanam sarva bhuteshu tapascha'smi tapasvishu ॥ 9

Meaning : पृथिव्याम् *prithivyam* : in earth, पुण्यः गन्धः च *punyah gandhah cha* : pure fragrance and, विभावसौ *vibhavasau*: in fire, तेजः च *tejah cha* : brilliance and, अस्मि *asmi* : I am, सर्वभूतेषु *sarvabhuteshu* : in all beings, जीवनम् *jivanam* : life, तपस्विषु *tapasvishu* : in ascetics, तपः च *tapah cha* : austerity and, अस्मि *asmi* : I am.

Substance : And, I am the sweet fragrance in the earth, the brilliance in fire, life in all beings, and austerity in ascetics.

Commentary : We cannot imagine the earth without smell, fire without brightness, living beings without life, ascetics without austerity! So the essence, the ruling principle, the characteristic quality of every thing is the Lord Himself.

10. बीजं मां सर्वभूतानां विद्धि पार्थ सनातनम् ।
बुद्धिर्बुद्धिमतामस्मि तेजस्तेजस्विनामहम् ॥ १०

Bijam mam sarvabhutanam viddhi partha sanatanam ।
buddhir buddhimatamasmi tejas tejasvinamaham ॥ 10

Meaning : पार्थ *Partha* : O Arjuna! मां *mam* : Me, सर्वभूतानाम् *sarvabhutanam* : of all beeings, सनातनम् *sanatanam*:

eternal, बीजम् *bijam* : seed, cause, विद्धि *viddhi* : know, बुद्धिमताम् *buddhimatam* : of the wise, बुद्धिः *buddhih* : intelligence, तेजस्विनाम *tejasvinam* : of the splendid, तेजः *tejah* : splendour, अस्मि *asmi* : I am.

Substance : O Arjuna! Know me as the seed of all beings, eternal; I am the intelligence of the wise, I am the splendour of the splendid.

Commentary : *Bijam* – The Lord declares that He is the seed, the cause of all beings. From Him, the seed, all beings have come, and unto Him they return. The tree is only another form of the seed. The life-force of the whole tree is already involved in the seed. The seed manifests its life-force in the new form of the tree. Even so, the Lord is the seed of all beings. It is He who is manifesting Himself in different forms. The essence is He in every thing. Thus knowing the wise man transcends all seperateness that appears to exist between one thing and another. Whoever he may be, to whatever caste or creed he may belong, high or low, the seed for him is God Himself. He is the cause of all. He is the father of all. So all beings in essence are God, for there is nothing else but He in the whole universe. He is the cause, and He is also the effect, and the effect is actually the cause in a different form. Knowing this, let no man imagine himself to be weak, neglected, forlorn and wretched. He is God Himself. By ignorance, he has misunderstood himself to be a limited body and a limited personality. Inspired by the words of the Lord let man throw away the veil of ignorance, and know himself as he really is (i.e.) the Supreme *Brahman*.

The inspiring message of *Gitacharya* is that He is Himself the seed and cause of all beings. He is present in all. This should give tremendous courage to all because it affirms the divine birth-right of each individual. Even the lowest would acquire Himalayan strength when he contemplates this truth. There is nothing low or wretched. The teacher of the Gita says, "I am the underlying principle behind you. It is from Me you

have come." Such words would lift up the sinking hearts of thousands of house-holders caught in the whirlpool of *samsara*. What if the wave is small or big ? It has behind it the mighty ocean. It subsists and is sustained by the infinite ocean. So let no man consider himself weak, mean and downtrodden. Let him contemplate the mighty ocean of purity and blessedness with which he is one, even as the ripple is one with the sea. The source of every man is not either his father or grand-father, but the supreme *Paramatma*. Generally man claims his lineage from some ancient sage. The Lord here wants him to go a step higher and realise that He is the seed out of which he has grown. [illegible] is the *Mulapurusha*.

Question : *What is the source of all beings ?*

Answer : Paramatma.

Question : *What is His nature ?*

Answer : He is Eternal.

11. बलं बलवतामस्मि कामरागविवर्जितम् ।
धर्माविरुद्धो भूतेषु कामोऽस्मि भरतर्षभ ॥ ११

Balam balavatamasmi kama raga vivarjitam ।
dharmaviruddho bhuteshu kamo 'smi bharatarshabha । 11

Meaning : भरतर्षभ *bharatarshabha :* O Arjuna ! अहम् *Aham :* I, बलवताम् *balavatam :* of the strong, कामरागविवर्जितम् *kamaragavivarjitam :* free from desire and passion, बलम् *balam :* strength, भूतेषु *bhuteshu :* in all beings, धर्माविरुद्धः *dharmaviruddhah :* not contrary to Dharma, कामः *kamah :* desire, अस्मि *asmi :* I am.

Substance And I am the strength of the strong devoid of desire and passion; and in all beings I am desire not contrary to *Dharma*.

Commentary : Strength is the glory of man, but it should be free from desire and passion. Strength should not be abused to satisfy sensual desires and greedy acquisition of worldly possessions. It should be expressed in doing good and bene-

volent acts, in worship of the Divine, and the pursuit of spiritual illumination. Whether it is intellectual or physical strength, if it is employed for selfish purposes to serve the lower impulses, it is wretched. In such cases, it is only demoniacal might, an asuric force, leading to self-destruction. The might of *Ravana* was impure by *Kama*, and it lead to his destruction and that of his people. So purity in strength, nobility in might, is what the Lord wants people to cultivate. His presence is felt in such strength.

The Lord is also 'desire' (*kama*) unopposed to *Dharma*. The desire to maintain one's family in a good condition, to live in society without becoming a burden on others, to relieve the suffering of others – such desire, though it is *kama*, is the divine aspect of the Lord. There is no evil in such desire.

There are three distinct stages in the development of man. In the first stage, man's desires instinctly run after sense-enjoyments and the gratification of lust and greed. In the second stage, desire becomes ennobled to the higher plane of selfless acts of service, generosity, and benevolence. It is then purified of its former evil. In the third and last stage, desires disappear from the mind when man realises the true Self. Then there are no desires, good or bad. It is true that Self-realisation is not possible without giving up all desires. But man's development is traceable from bad to good, and from good to the free state of *Moksha*. Here the Lord speaks of the second stage. Desires which agree with the *Sastras*, which do not run counter to *Dharma*, produce no evil effects. Gradually, man should rise to the '*nirvikalpa*' state of mind. Give up bad desires, and then give up all desires, and be thoroughly contented in the Self. This is the significance of the Lord's statement here.

12. ये चैव सात्त्विका भावा राजसास्तामसाश्च ये ।
मत्त एवेति तान्विद्धि न त्वहं तेषु ते मयि ॥ १२

Ye chai'va sattvika bhava rajasas tamasas cha ye ।
matta eve'ti tan viddhi na tvaham teshu te mayi । 12

Meaning : सात्त्विकाः *sattvikah :* pure, भावाः *bhavah :* objects, ये *ye :* whatever, राजसाश्च *rajasah cha :* and active, तामसाश्च *tamasah cha :* and inert, ये चैव *ye chaiva :* and also what-so-ever, तान् *tan :* them, मत्त एव इति *mattah eva iti :* proceed from Me only, विद्धि *viddhi :* know, तु *tu :* but, तेषु *teshu :* in them, अहम् *aham :* I am, न *na :* not, ते *te :* they, मयि *mayi :* (are) in Me.

Substance : Whatsoever objects that are pure, active or inert, know that they all proceed from Me; but I am not in them, they are in Me.

Commentary : The Lord has already declared that He is the sustaining power behind the universe. What is sustained cannot be without the power that sustains it. So the existence of *Paramatma* makes the existence of every thing possible. Minus *Paramatma*, nothing can exist. The universe as we see it with all its panoramic changes is the creative power of the Lord. In the same way as the snake in the rope is sustained by the rope itself, the Lord is the cause of the illusory universe, and just as the rope is really a rope even during the time of one's illusion, so also the Lord is Himself the universe whether one realises it or not. Just as the snake depends upon the rope, and the rope does not depend upon the snake, so also all beings are dependent upon the Lord, but the Lord is not dependent on them. The wave depends on the ocean, but the ocean does not depend on the wave.

When the Lord says that all the qualities (*sattva, rajas, tamas*) are caused by Him, it is certainly not to encourage *tamasic* or *rajasic* temperments. The point to note is that the Lord is the final cause of all that exists as objects or qualities.

The Lord explains why man does not know Him.

13. त्रिभिर्गुणमयैर्भावैरेभिः सर्वमिदं जगत् ।
मोहितं नाभिजानाति मामेभ्यः परमव्ययम् ॥ १३ ॥

Tribhir gunamayair bhavairebhih sarvamidam jagat ।
mohitam na'bhijanati mamebhyah paramavyayam ॥ 13

Meaning : एभिः *ebhih :* by these, त्रिभिः *tribhih :* three, गुणमयैः *gunamayaih :* composed of Gunas, भावैः *bhavaih :* natures, सर्वमिदं जगत् *sarvamidam jagat :* all this world, मोहितम् *mohitam :* is deluded, एभ्यः *ebhyah :* from these qualities, परम् *param :* higher, अव्ययम् *avyayam :* imperishable, माम् *mam:* Me, नाभिजानाति *nabhijanati :* does not know.

Substance : Deluded by nature composed of these three qualities (*Sattva, Rajas,* and *Tamas*) the whole world does not know Me, the Higher and Imperishable.

Commentary : When the clouds spread over the sky one cannot see the Sun, who is above the clouds. Even so, when the mind is deluded by the three qualities, one cannot see *Atma*, who is transcendental. Enveloped by these qualities, man remains like a worm in a fruit. It can move inside the fruit, but it cannot come out unless the rind is broken. So long as the qualities agitate the mind, the real Self cannot be perceived.

It is necessary first of all to understand the cause of ignorance and know that one is bound. Then only does he make the attempt to regain his freedom. The spiritual aspirant is on a higher plane because he has become conscious of his bondage and is eager to know the truth. This itself is a great step in evolution. The majority of people do not even know that they are slaves to their own lower nature. The aspirant is awakened to his present position as a bound soul, and so he strives to get himself free from the shackles that bind him. Except the *jivanmuktas*, all the others – rich and poor, great and small, learned and illiterate – are bound by *Maya*. The eye cannot see objects when there is a cataract. It should be removed by surgical operation. Then the eye becomes clear and sees things distinctly. Such an operation should be conducted by the spiritual seeker. In this verse, the cause of ignorance is explained. In the next, the way to freedom is pointed out.

The power of Maya, and the way to cross over are stated.

14. दैवी ह्येषा गुणमयी मम माया दुरत्यया।
मामेव ये प्रपद्यन्ते मायामेतां तरन्ति ते ॥ १४

Daivi hyesha gunamayi mama maya duratyaya ।
mameva ye prapadyante mayametam taranti te ॥ 14 ॥

Meaning: हि *hi:* verily, दैवी *daivi:* (is) divine, of transcendental power, गुणमयी *gunamayi:* composed of the three qualities, एषा *esha:* this, मम *mama:* My, माया *maya:* cosmic illusion, दुरत्यया *duratyaya:* difficult to cross over, माम् एव *Mam eva:* Me only, ये *ye:* those who, प्रपद्यन्ते *prapadyante:* take refuge, ते *te:* they, एताम् मायाम् *etam mayam:* this Maya, तरन्ति *taranti:* cross over.

Substance: This divine illusion of Mine caused by the qualities, is difficult to cross over; those who take refuge in Me alone, cross over this illusion.

Commentary: This verse is of very great importance to all seekers. What is this *Maya*? What is the way to go beyond it? These two are fundamental questions. The entire universe is under the power of *Maya*, cosmic illusion. Its true nature should be understood first, then the seeker has to follow the way suggested by the Lord to go beyond it.

Four attributes are mentioned to describe the nature of *Maya*:

1) *Daivi*: This cosmic illusion *Maya* is divine, possessing transcendental power. *Maya* is of inscrutable, infinite power. Man and the *Devas* also are deluded by its power, and plunged in the flood of *samsara*, the cycle of birth and death. Material power, intellectual subtlety, artistic genius, wealth and glory, are all inadequate even to understand it, much less to cross over. Since it is divine, the Divine alone could deal with it.

2) *Gunamayi*: This *Maya* is made of the three qualities – *sattva, rajas,* and *tamas*. *Maya* has no form. The qualities themselves constitute *Maya*. If these qualities are removed from the mind, *Maya* disappears. The whole world is possessed by those qualities and is deluded.

3) *Mama*: *Maya* is the supreme power of the Lord. It is under His control and acts according to His command. He may withdraw the power into Himself or project it outside at His will. Though *Maya* has power to delude the whole universe, yet it is just an instrument in the hands of God. Like servant before the master *Maya* obeys the Lord. It is inscrutable, mysterious, and wonderful to those who are under its power. To the Lord and the perfected *yogis*, it is only a non-existant reality. That which is not, that is *Maya*. That which is non-existent and yet creates the illusion of Reality is *Maya*. The world is not, yet it appears to exist. The individual self '*ahamkara*' is not, yet it appears to exist. The reality is covered up and what is unreal is made to appear as the real. Such is the mystery of *Maya*. But to the wise, it is nothing. The ocean may be difficult to cross for the ordinary man, but to *Garutman* it is no more than a small canal. He flies over it by the superior power of his wings.

4) *Duratyaya*: It is difficult to cross over *Maya*, but it is not impossible. Those who yield to the temptations of sensual pleasures, who are attached to material things cannot cross the ocean of *Maya*. All spiritual *sadhana* is intended to eliminate the temptations of the flesh and the delusions of the mind.

Having described the power of *Maya* in the first line, the Lord points the way to cross over it in the second line. Those who take refuge in the Lord transcend *Maya*. Devotion to the Lord, surrender to the Lord is the way to overcome *Maya*. 'Surrender to Me. I will take you beyond *Maya*'. This is the Lord's command. *Sankara* says that devotion to the Lord's lotus feet is the strong boat that will carry people beyond the ocean of *samsara*.

Human skill and intelligence is indeed capable of many worldly victories and achievements. Inventions are made,

empires are built, battles are fought and won by human intelligence and skill. But when man stands confronted with the cosmic illusion, he is by himself powerless. Only by surrender to the Supreme Lord, and by His grace alone, can man cross the frontiers of *samsara*, and enter the land of bliss and blessedness.

Service of the sages and *Rishis* who had already gone beyond *Maya* is also of greatest help to the spiritual aspirant. Having crossed the mire of delusion, they help mankind to do so.

The Lord is perfectly clear in his **declaration** *'mam eva'*.– Me only – is His command. Nothing else, no one else, can work the miracle. If one surrenders to the objective world he will suffer endless misery. If he surrenders to the Lord, he will obtain the highest rewards of freedom and bliss. The choice lies in man. Each one has to take the decision himself. No one can decide for another. The Lord's promise that he would take man beyond *maya*, should give infinite strength to man. This verse should be read and re-read, and the divine light by which the enveloping darkness will all be dispelled will flow.

Devotion to the Lord means to have unswerving faith in Him, to peform sacred works, to meditate on the Self, to cultivate virtues, and such other practices that purify the mind.

Question : *What is the nature of Maya ?*

Answer : It is divine, composed of the three gunas, subject to the Lord and difficult to cross over.

Question : *What is the way to cross over Maya ?*

Answer : Surrender to the Lord and devotion to Him is the way to go beyond *maya.*

The Lord explains why some men do not worship Him.

15. न मां दुष्कृतिनो मूढाः प्रपद्यन्ते नराधमाः।
माययापहृतज्ञाना आसुरं भावमाश्रिताः ॥

Na mam duskritino mudhah prapadyante naradhamah ।
mayaya 'pahritajnana asuram bhavamasritah । 15

Meaning : दुष्कृतिनः *dushkritanah :* evil–doers, मूढाः *mudhah :* the deluded, मायया *mayaya :* by Maya, अपहृतज्ञानाः *apahritajnanah :* of deluded understanding, आसुरं भावं *asuram bhavam :* demonical nature, आश्रिताः *asritah :* having taken to, नराधमाः *naradhamah :* the lowest of men, माम् *mam :* Me, न प्रपद्यन्ते *na prapadyante :* do not seek.

Substance : Evil-doers, the deluded, the lowest of men, deprived of knowledge by *Maya*, having taken to demonical nature, do not take refuge in Me.

Commentary : It is declared in the previous verse that those who surrender to the Lord go beyond *maya*. But do all people surrender ? No. The Lord here describes those who do not come to Him. They are ignorant because their understanding is deluded by *maya*. They are the lowest of men. They have taken to demonical nature and act like vile and wretched beings. *Maya* acts like a thief. If it is allowed to enter the heart, all that is precious – the discrimination, the superior intelligence, the virtue, the *sadhana* – are stolen in a trice, and people are left helpless and wretched. Man is degraded into a demon. The wise man is transformed into a fool. What is *maya* ? The bad *samskaras*, lust, and anger, greed, arrogance, pride and egoism–all these taken together is *Maya*. Therefore by discrimination, devotion, dispassion and sacred thoughts and acts, one should guard his inner self from the powerful onslaughts of *maya*.

Question : *Who are those who do not seek the Lord ?*

Answer : Evil–doers, deluded men, the lowest of human beings, whose discrimination is stolen by *maya*, who have taken to demonical nature, and who do not take refuge in the Lord.

Question : *Who steals man's understanding ?*

Answer : *maya.*

The Lord mentions four types of His devotees.

16. चतुर्विधा भजन्ते मां जनाः सुकृतिनोऽर्जुन ।
आर्तो जिज्ञासुरर्थार्थी ज्ञानी च भरतर्षभ ॥ १६

Chaturvidha bhajante mam janah sukritino 'rjuna ।
artho jijnasurartharthi jnani cha bharatarshabha ॥ 16

Meaning : भरतर्षभ *bharatarshabha* : Lord of the Bharatas! अर्जुन *arjuna* : O Arjuna ! आर्तः *arthah* : the distressed, जिज्ञासुः *jijnasah* : the knowledge-seeker, अर्थार्थी *artharthi* : the wealth-seeker, ज्ञानी च *jnani cha* : and the wise, चतुर्विधाः *chaturvidha* : four kinds, सुकृतिनः *sukritinah* : virtuous, जनाः *janah* : men, माम् *mam* : Me, भजन्ते *bhajante* : worship.

Substance : O Arjuna ! Four kinds of virtuous men worship Me – the distressed, the knowledge-seeker, the wealth-seeker, and the wise.

Commentary : The devotees of the Lord are classified into four types. All of them worship the Lord. But their aim and purpose are different. They are all righteous people (*sukritanah*) as distinguished from the opposite type of demonical natures described in the previous verse.

1) *Artah* : Men in distress remember the Lord and pray to Him for the removal of their difficulties and sorrows. Men suffering from painful diseases cry for the mercy of the Lord to save them. So also, when attacked by dacoits or wild animals, when harassed by wicked people, men call on the Lord to protect them. These form the largest majority of the devotees in the world. They seek refuge in various *Devas* for help and protection. Whatever their nature may be, they remember the Lord sometimes or other, and recognise Him as the Higher power, and so, they are all virtuous – '*sukritanah*'. Gajendra cried for the protection of the Lord when he was caught by the sea-monster. Draupadi did so when she was about to be stripped naked in the Royal Court of Dhritarashtra. The Lord did come down to protect them.

2) *Jijnasuh* : These are people who are eager to know and understand the Lord. Great research is carried on into the objective world, and people are spending their high intelligence and energy in these material pursuits only. Here and there we come across a research-worker in the field of the Divine. They study the *sastras*, examine their own nature, seek the guidance of the *Guru*, and try to find out the ultimate cause of creation, and the basic secret of their own personality. The Lord has already declared that the knowledge-seeker (*jijnashu*) transcends *sastraic* knowledge and *Vedic* ritualism. Such intense yearning to know the truth is the effect of the good done in several births.

3) *Artharthi* : Men who seek for prosperity are the third type of devotees. Their object is to enjoy worldly prosperity in the various fields of human life. Naturally they seek the benevolence of the Lord to confer prosperity on them. They are also the devotees of the Lord.

It is to be noted that the infinite compassion of the Lord is also open for people who desire material comforts, unopposed to the law of *Dharma*.

4) *Jnani* : The man of knowledge knows the real nature of the Lord, and is able to discriminate between the true and the illusory. He has attained to the Self-state and lives in constant absorption in *Atma*. Unlike the '*arta*' and '*artharthi*' he has no fears and no desires. He loves the Lord because he knows that He is the only Reality in the universe, that He is the repositary of all wisdom and bliss. He has nothing to gain for himself, and so his devotion to the Lord is a spontaneous act of oneness with Him.

Thus the four classes of men are included among the Lord's devotees. They are all righteous men. Among '*arta*' *bhaktas* we have the example of Gajendra and Draupadi; among the '*Jijnasu*' *bhaktas* Parikshit, Uddhava, and others; among the '*Artharthi*' *bhaktas* Sugriva, Dhruva, and others; and among the '*Jnani*' *bhaktas* Suka, Narada, Bhishma, Prahlada and others.

The Lord says 'among these, the Jnani is the best'.

17. तेषां ज्ञानी नित्ययुक्त एकभक्तिर्विशिष्यते ।
प्रियो हि ज्ञानिनोऽत्यर्थमहं स च मम प्रियः ॥ १७

Tesham jnani nityayukta ekabhaktirvisishyate I
priyo hi jnanino 'tyarthamaham sa cha mama priyah I 17

Meaning : तेषाम् *tesham :* of them, नित्ययुक्तः *nityayuktah:* ever united with Atma, एकभक्तिः *ekabhaktih :* devoted only to Me, ज्ञानी *jnani :* the sage of knowledge, विशिष्यते *visishyate:* excels, ज्ञानिनः *jnaninah :* of the wise, अहम् *aham :* I, अत्यर्थम् *atyartham :* exceedingly, प्रियः हि *priyah hi :* dear verily, सः च *sah cha :* and he, मम *mama :* to me, प्रियः *priyah :* is dear.

Substance : Of these, the wise constantly harmonised, devoted to the One, is the best; I am exceedingly dear to him, and he is dear to Me.

Commentary : The *Jnani* is declared to be the highest of the Lord's devotees, because he possesses two qualities not found in the other types. Firstly, he is constantly absorbed in the Self, and secondly he is devoted to the Lord only and nothing else in the world.

1) *Nitya yuktah*–The *Jnani* who has realised the Self is always in contact with the Lord. The others think of the Lord now and then. They are part-time devotees; they think of the Lord for some time and then go back to their daily activities of life. But the *Jnani* has no worldly activities to divert his mind from the Self. So he is ever united with the Lord '*Nityayuktah*'. Though in the early stages, the devotee's mind vacillates between the Lord and worldly life, yet it is quite possible gradually to develop constant devotion and since the *Jnani* has achieved this, he is declared to be the best of the devotees.

2) *ekabhaktih*–The *Jnani* is devoted only to the Lord. He has no attachment for anything else in the world. The others

have desires and fears, because they are attached to the world, and think of the Lord for help and protection. The *Jnani* on the other hand has already found out the illusory nature of the world, and so he has no attraction for anything like wealth or family, name or glory which usually tempt the ignorant. He knows the One Supreme Reality, and his mind is absorbed in it. The Lord is dear to him, and he is dear to the Lord. The closeness of the relationship between the Lord and the devotee is indicated here. Nothing can stand in between the two. In fact the world stands between man and God. The *Jnani* has removed this mighty obstacle from his way and has come so close to the Lord that he and his Master become one. When the Lord is pleased with his devotee, what more does he want? The reward of God's love is *moksha*.

In the ultimate analysis there can be no difference between *Jnana* and *Bhakti*. That is what is implied in the single-minded devotion of the *Jnani*. It is only in the early stages of *Sadhana* that *Jnana* and devotion appear to be different, but as man rises to higher and higher spiritual planes, he discovers the truth, that the Supreme Lord of the devotee and the *Brahman* of the *Jnani* are only two different names for the same One.

Question : *Who is the best of the devotees?*

Answer : *Jnani.*

Question : *Why?*

Answer : He is always absorbed in the Lord, and loves only the Lord and nothing else.

Question : *Whom does the Jnani love most?*

Answer : The Lord.

Question : *What is the duty of man?*

Answer : He should try to acquire Lord's love by his single-minded devotion.

The oneness of the Jnani with the Lord is declared.

18. उदाराः सर्व एवैते ज्ञानी त्वात्मैव मे मतम् ।
आस्थितः स हि युक्तात्मा मामेवानुत्तमां गतिम् ॥ १८

Udarah sarva evai'te jnanitvatmai'va me matam ।
asthitah sa hi yuktatma mameva'nuttamam gatim ॥ 18

Meaning : एते सर्वे *ete sarve :* all these (four types of devotees), उदाराः एव *udarah eva :* verily noble, ज्ञानी तु *jnani tu :* but the wise, आत्मा एव *atma eva :* very Self, मे *me :* My, मतम् *matam :* creed, हि *hi :* because, सः *sah :* he, युक्तात्मा *yuktatma :* harmonised in mind, माम् एव *mam eva :* Me only, अनुत्तमाम् *anuttamam :* (as) supreme, गतिम् *gatim :* goal, आस्थितः *asthitah :* is established.

Substance : Noble are all these; but I hold the wise verily as Myself; because he, Self-united, is established in Me the supreme goal.

Commentary : It is declared here that the *jnani* is verily God himself, because he considers the Lord to be the only supreme goal, and is established in Him with steadfast mind. But the other devotees are also noble, because they have faith in the Lord and worship Him sometime or other. These are certainly superior to the rest of mankind who have no faith in the Lord.

The knower of Brahman becomes Brahman. So is the *jnani*, the Lord Himself. The others are dualistic in their attitude. They think of themselves as separate from the Lord and worship Him as a superior Being. This is quite natural in the early stages of *Sadhana*. When the aspirant is enthroned in yoga he knows that he is not separate from the Lord. That is why the *jnani* is described as harmonised in mind, '*yuktatma*'. The *jnani* knows that the Lord is his supreme goal. He has no desire and attachment for anything else. He has discovered the illusory nature of the world. And so, the Lord is the only Reality for him. With an unswerving mind he thinks, lives, moves and has his being in the Lord. That is why the *jnani* is worshipped as the Lord Himself. Vyasa is described as Vishnu Himself with two arms. Though such men dwell in a mortal body, they are verily God. Where is God to be found ? The answer definitely is that God is found in His devotee, the *jnani*. Whatever path is followed–*karma, bhakti, jnana* or *dhyana*–the final goal is union with the Supreme Being. All *Sadhana* finds its ultimate fulfilment in the realisation of oneness with the Lord.

Question : *Why is the jnani superior ?*

Answer : He is superior because there is no difference between him and the Lord. The *jnani* is God Himself.

Question : *How does the jnani acquire that position ?*

Answer : With a steadfast mind, he thinks of the Lord as His supreme goal and is established in Him.

Such men of knowledge are rare and exceptional.

19. बहूनां जन्मनामन्ते ज्ञानवान्मां प्रपद्यते ।
वासुदेवः सर्वमिति स महात्मा सुदुर्लभः ॥ १९

Bahunam janmanamante jnanavan mam prapadyate ।
vasudevah sarvamiti sa mahatma sudurlabhah ॥

Meaning : बहूनाम् *bahunam :* of many, जन्मनाम् *janmanam:* births, अन्ते *ante :* at the end, ज्ञानवान् *jnanavan :* the wise, सर्वम् *sarvam :* (is) all, वासुदेवः इति *Vasudevah iti :* thus the Lord, माम् *mam :* Me, प्रपद्यते *prapadyate :* realises, सः महात्मा *sah mahatma :* such a man–great soul, सुदुर्लभः *sudurlabhah :* (is) very rare.

Substance : At the end of many births, the *jnani* realises Me, knowing that all is God. Such a great soul is indeed very rare.

Commentary : From time immemorial, man has passed through innumerable births. From worms and germs, reptiles, birds, and beasts, man at last attains the human birth. Several births pass away in a state of ignorance. And then, the desire to know the truth is born in the heart of man. Even then, several births pass away in the ups and downs of spiritual *Sadhana*. Ultimately man realises the truth, that everything is God. So long as there is the slightest trace of differentiation,

knowledge is imperfect. Perfection of *jnana* is the discovery that there is only One and that is God, and there is nothing but He in the whole universe. Sages of such realisation are indeed very rare.

But it would be foolish to be lazy and dull in spiritual *sadhana*, because realisation can come only after many births. On the other hand, knowing full well that he has passed through millions of births, man should strive for liberation even in this very birth. The test of knowledge is the recognition of God every where. So long as the objective world '*drisya*' dominates the mind causing contradictory feelings of attraction and repulsion, there is no knowledge. The aspirant should intensify his *sadhana* till he comes to know without any doubt that what has been appearing as the objective world is nothing but the Lord Himself.

The verse does not mean that only after many births man realises God. It means that man acquires knowledge after many births and he then realises God. That auspicious moment when such realisation takes place is the end of all births. If one makes himself fit for realisation, knowledge may dawn on him this moment. There is no time-limit. Ripeness of mind is all that is needed.

The Lord confers the title '*mahatma*' on such realised souls.

Question : *When does man attain moksha* ?

Answer : When he acquires *jnana*.

Question : *When does he acquire jnana* ?

Answer : After many births.

Question : *What is the realisation of a jnani* ?

Answer : That God is every thing.

Question : *Are such men common* ?

Answer : No. Very rare.

Question : *What is the test of a jnani* ?

Answer : The realisation that everything is God.

The Lord explains the position of those who worship the Devas.

20. कामैस्तैस्तैर्हृतज्ञानाः प्रपद्यन्तेऽन्यदेवताः ।
तं तं नियममास्थाय प्रकृत्या नियताः स्वया ॥ २०

Kamaistais-tair hritajnanah prapadyante 'nyadevatah ।
tam-tam niyamamasthaya prakritya niyatah svaya ॥ 20

Meaning : स्वया *svaya* : by one's own, प्रकृत्या *prakritya* : by nature, नियताः *niyatah* : led, तैः तैः कामैः *taih taih kamaih:* by whatsoever desires, हृतज्ञानाः *hritajnanah* : men of lost discrimination, तंतं नियमम् *tam tam niyamam* : this and that rite, आस्थाय *asthaya* : having followed, अन्यदेवताः *anyadevatah:* other Devas, प्रपद्यन्ते *prapadyante* : worship.

Substance : Those whose wisdom is rent away by desires approach other *Devas*, resorting to various external rites according to their own natures.

Commentary : Without thinking of the supreme Being, some people worship other *Devas* for the purpose of acquiring some worldly benefit. Their wisdom is rent away by their desires, and so they perform various external rites and rituals for desire-gratification. They have no idea of the Supreme *Paramatma*.

There are some people whose aim is to realise the Self but who are deprived of understanding by the deluding power of *maya*. There are some others who entertain desires and who seek for their gratification by worshipping various other *Devas*. The former have faith in the Supreme Lord; the latter do not have such faith in the Supreme.

Question : *What steals away man's understanding* ?

Answer : Desires.

Question : *How do they arise* ?

Answer : By past ***samskaras***.

Question : *What does man do in consequence ?*

Answer : He forgets the Supreme Lord, and worship other *Devas* for the gratification of his desires.

The reward of worshipping other Gods is explained in two verses.

21. यो यो यां यां तनुं भक्तः श्रद्धयार्चितुमिच्छति ।
तस्य तस्याचलां श्रद्धां तामेव विदधाम्यहम् ॥ २१

Yo-yo yam-yam tanum bhaktah
sraddhaya 'rchitumicchati ।
tasya-tasya 'chalam sraddham
tameva vidadhamyaham ॥ 21

Meaning : यः यः भक्तः *yah yah bhaktah :* who-so-ever worshipped, यां यां तनुम् *yam yam tanum :* what-so-ever form (of Devas), श्रद्धया *sraddhaya :* with faith, अर्चितुम् *architum :* to worship, इच्छति *icchati :* desires, तस्य तस्य *tasya tasya :* to such and such, तां श्रद्धां एव *tam sraddham eva :* that faith only, अचलाम् *achalam :* firm, अहम् *aham :* I, विदधामि *vidadhami :* make.

Substance : Whosoever worshipper desires to worship whatsoever form of *Devas* with faith, to such and such (devotee) I make his faith unswerving.

Commentary : The Lord here declares that He confirms the faith of those people who worship different Gods for different purposes. The love of the Supreme Being is infinite. He is present in all these different *Devas*. So when man worships them with faith, his faith is made unswerving by the Lord Himself. The point to note is that if there is faith in some form or other, such faith is strengthened by the Lord.

This is the unique future of the Hindu concept of God. Each man is free to worship the Divine in any form. There is no restriction or compulsion in the choice of the object of worship. The path may be different. Whatever path one may

follow, he has to come ultimately to the One Supreme Being. Since this universal vision is hard to acquire, men are given infinite choice to worship any form which appeals to their imagination, according to their past *samskaras*. The only condition is that there should be faith in the worship. Progress should be maintained whether the pace is slow or quick. And also, the destination should be kept in view, and there should be no deviation or back-sliding. Such men are blessed by the Lord with increased faith and stronger devotion to their respective Gods. So it is man's duty to start worship of his chosen Deity. Faith and devotion are conferred on him by the Lord Himself.

Question : *What is the chief quality of worship ?*

Answer : Faith.

Question : *How does the Lord help such men ?*

Answer : By confirming their faith in worshipping their chosen Deity.

The rewards of such worship are conferred by the Lord Himself.

22. स तया श्रद्धया युक्तस्तस्याराधनमीहते ।
लभते च ततः कामान्मयैव विहितान्हि तान् ॥ २२

Sa taya sraddhaya yuktastasya 'radhanam ihate ।
Labhate cha tatah kaman mayai'va vihitan hi tan ॥ 22

Meaning : सः *sah :* he (the desire-prompted devotee), तया श्रद्धया *taya sraddhaya :* with that faith, युक्तः *yuktah :* possessed, तस्य *tasya :* of it, आराधनम् *aradhanam :* worship, ईहते *ihate :* engages in, मया एव *maya eva :* by Me only, विहितान् *vihitan :* ordained, तान् कामान् हि *tan kaman hi :* those desires verily, ततः *tatah :* from those Gods, लभते *labhate :* Obtains.

Substance : Endowed with faith, he engages in the worship of his chosen Deity and from that obtains his desires, these being ordained by Me alone.

Commentary : Whatever rewards the devotee obtains by faithful worship of the *Devas*, all of them are ordained by the

Lord Himself. So, though the rewards appear to flow from any particular Deity, they have their source in the Lord and are determined by Him alone. The Lord is the highest authority in this universal Government. Indra, Varuna, Vasu, Agni and other *Devas* are functionaries occupying different positions and wielding different powers. All these are determined by the Lord Himself. These elemental forces act according to His will. They derive their power, position and authority from Him. Their field of work, the nature and extent of their power, what they can do – the whole system is ordained by the Lord. So, any gift received from any *Deva* (Indra, Varuna or Kubera etc.) comes from the Lord and is ordained by Him. The wise man approaches the Lord Himself, and the partially wise seek fulfilment from other *Devas* who are but agents of the different powers of God Himself.

Question : *What does the devotee do ?*

Answer : He worships the *Devas* with faith ?

Question : *What does he obtain by it ?*

Answer : The fulfilment of his desires.

Question : *Who ordains the law of worship and reward ?*

Answer : The Supreme Being – So, it is from Him that the devotee receives the rewards of his worship through the medium of different *Devas*.

The rewards of other Devas are perishable; Moksha is the reward of the Supreme Lord.

23. अन्तवत्तु फलं तेषां तद्भवत्यल्पमेधसाम् ।
देवान्देवयजो यान्ति मद्भक्ता यान्ति मामपि ॥ २३

Antavattu phalam tesham tadbhavatyalpamedhasam
devan devayajo yanti madbhakta yanti mamapi 23

Meaning : अल्पमेधसाम् *alpamedhasam* : of little wisdom, तेषाम् *tesham* : of them, तत् फलम् तु *tat phalam tu* : that fruit verily, अन्तवत् *antavat* : finite, having an end, भवति *bhavati* : is,

देवयजः *devayajah* : the worshippers of the Devas, देवान् *devan* : to the Devas, यान्ति *yanti* : go, मद्भक्ताः *mad bhaktah* : my devotees, मामपि यान्ति *mam api yanti* : go to Me also.

Substance : The fruit of these men of little wisdom is finite indeed; those who worship the *Devas* go to the *Devas*, and my devotees go to Me verily.

Commentary : Those who worship other *Devas* are men of little intelligence, because their exertion yields only very temporary and perishable rewards, like wordly prosperity, wealth, power and position. It is only the unawakened dull brains that can think of those finite things, letting go the infinite benefit of true knowledge and devotion. He who seeks a small pond when the sacred *Ganjes* is flowing by, he who leaves the wish-fulfilling plant of Heaven and goes to a small tree, tempted by its half-sweet half-bitter fruits – such is the man who forgets the Supreme Lord and devotes himself to the worship of the lesser Deities for the purpose of enjoying small gifts and pleasures.

High or low, whatever is seen (*drisya*) perishes, be he Indra or Vasu. What does not perish is *Atma*, the seer (*Drik*). All else is subject to death. Therefore the wise seek for the imperishable. The object of worship determines the goal of the devotee. The worshippers of the *Devas* go to the *Devas*, of the *Rakshasas* to the *Rakshasas*, of the *Pitris* to the *Pitris*. So the seeker has to make his choice after careful discrimination. The Teacher of the Gita declares that those who worship Him go to Him, the Supreme Lord.

Question : *What is the reward of those who worship the Devas ?*

Answer : Finite – Having an end.

Question : *Who are those that seek for it ?*

Answer : Men of small intelligence.

Question : *To whom do they go ?*

Answer : To the *Devas*.

Question: *Who reaches the Supreme Lord?*

Answer : Those who worship the Supreme Lord reach Him.

The ignorant do not understand the Lord's higher nature.

24. अव्यक्तं व्यक्तिमापन्नं मन्यन्ते मामबुद्धयः ।
परं भावमजानन्तो ममाव्ययमनुत्तमम् ॥ २४

Avyaktam vyaktimapannam manyante mamabuddhayah
param bhavamajananto mama'vyayam anuttamam 24

Meaning: अव्ययम् *avyayam* : imperishable, अनुत्तमम् *aunuttamam* : supreme, परम् *param* : transcendental, मम *mama* : My, भावम् *bhavam* : nature, अजानन्तः *ajanantah* : not knowing, अबुद्धयः *abuddhayah* : men devoid of reason, अव्यक्तम् *avyaktam* : the unmanifested, unknowable by the senses and mind, माम् *mam* : Me, व्यक्तिमापन्नम् *vyaktim aparnnam* : as possessing separate name and form, मन्यन्ते *manyante* : think.

Substance : Those devoid of knowledge think of Me, the unmanifested, as having name and form, not knowing My imperishable supreme and transcendental nature.

Commentary : The Lord is really formless and universal. He is transcendental, beyond *maya*, infinite and eternal. For the purpose of protecting the righteous and punishing the wicked, and establishing *Dharma*, He takes birth in this world. As *Maya* is under His control the power of adopting or discarding His form is in His own power.

When the Lord thus incarnates Himself as a separate individual, His immortality is not at all affected. The separate form as Krishna or Rama is His own creation, and when the purpose of His *Avatara* is fulfilled, the form is dissolved and He remains the Eternal. The devotees are blessed by such *Avataras*. But unfortunately, the ignorant men of little intelligence consider the name and form of the Lord as His real nature, and so, they do not find Him different from other

mortals. No doubt the devotees are endowed with faith and devotion when they see the manifestation of the Lord as Rama or Krishna. But they should know the higher nature (*Parambhavam*) of the Lord, and should not get confused.

Four attributes are mentioned about the higher nature of the Lord. (1) He is unknowable (*Avyakta*). (2) He is transcendental (*Param*). (3) He is imperishable (*Avyayam*). (4) He is supreme (*Anuttamam*). He is unknowable by the senses and the mind. The phenomenal world is visible to the senses and comprehensible by the mind. If the Lord also is a composition of the elements, he would dissolve like any other mortal form. But he is imperishable. He is subtler than any other. The material sky (*Akasa*) is itself invisible and so how can the Lord whose nature is more subtle (*Chidakasa*) be an object of perception? He is the whole universe, but he is at the same time not bound by physical laws, because He is transcendental. Since He is beyond time and place, and is uncontaminated by material elements, since He is not subject to dissolution like other things, He is described as Supreme, most excellent (*Anuttama*).

It should be clearly understood that this verse is not a disparagement of the worship of the different manifestations of the Lord in temples and images. The common devotee must go through this process of fixing some form of the Lord in the mind and worshipping Him in that manner. But he should not stop there. As his vision enlarges and his devotion deepens he will naturally evolve towards the transcendental perfection of the Lord. Devotion of this type is commendable.

What is condemned here is to attribute mortality to the Lord and regard Him to be no more than a man. Sisupala could see Lord Krishna as a cowherd-boy and nothing more. It was Bhishma who could understand the transcendental nature of the Lord, while he appeared in the beautiful form of Krishna. Bhishma could worship the Lord as Krishna, and at the same time know that He is the imperishable *Paramatma*. Ravana could think of Sri Rama only as a mortal, subject to death like

any other. But sages like Vasishta and others could understand that Sri Rama is the Lord Himself appearing as the Prince of Ayodhya. It is this understanding wich is suggested in the verse for the guidance of all seekers. (Vide 4–6).

Question : *What is the real nature of the Lord ?*

Answer : It is unmanifest, transcendental, imperishable and supreme.

Question : *Who thinks of the Lord as a mortal ?*

Answer : The ignorant, with deluded understanding.

The Lord explains why He is not comprehanded by the common man.

25. नाहं प्रकाशः सर्वस्य योगमायासमावृतः ।
मूढोऽयं नाभिजानाति लोको मामजमव्ययम् ॥ २५

Na'ham prakasah sarvasya yogamayasamavritah ।
mudho'yam na'bhijanati loko mam ajamavyayam ॥ 25

Meaning : योगमायासमावृतः *yogamayasamavritah* : veiled by My Yoga Maya, अहम् *aham* : I, सर्वस्य *sarvasya* : to all, प्रकाशः न *prakasah na* : do not manifest, मूढः *mudhah* : deluded, अयं लोकः *ayam lokah* : this world (People), माम् *mam* : Me, अजम् *ajam* : unborn, अव्ययम् *avyayam* : imperishable, न अभिजानाति *nabhijanati* : does not know.

Substance : Enveloped by My *Yogamaya* (cosmic illusion) I am not manifest to all; this world, deluded, knows Me not, the unborn and imperishable.

Commentary : If God is Omnipresent, why does He not manifest to all. This question is frequently asked by many. The answer is here. He is veiled by his own power (*Sakti*), the cosmic illusion, and so He is not seen by all. To those for whom the veil is drawn off by intense discrimination He becomes visible. Between man and God, there is the veil of cosmic illusion. It is *Maya* composed of the three qualities (*Sattva*,

Rajas and *Tamas*). The veil of '*Tamas*' is dark, that of *Rajas* is red, and that of *Sattva* is pure white. Thus the threefold veil covers up the effulgent *Paramatma*. As the devotee tears away veil after veil by intense *sadhana*, the Reality behind manifests itself as the final Truth. All the spiritual practices are intended to remove the obstruction that stands between man and God, and not to produce or create God ! He is already there, the eternal conscious principle in all. The problem simply is to clear off the veil of *Maya*. The power of *maya* and how to cross over it has already been declared by the Lord (6–14).

When a dark pot is placed over the lamp, light is not seen. When the pot is taken off, the light is visible. When one covers his eyes with his hands, he cannot see the Sun. When he takes off his hands, he sees the Sun. Therefore, though the Lord is present in all, He is not seen. It is true to say that what one sees as the objective world is also the Lord, but such is the power of the cosmic illusion that he is confused and thinks of the world only as matter and nothing more. When the mind is cleared of the illusion he sees every thing as the Lord. (*Vasudevas sarvamiti*).

The ignorant are strengthening *maya* and forging strong shackles to bind themselves. Lust and sensuality, indulgence in sense-pleasures, greed and hatred – these are haunting the mind of humanity, and purity and self-control are at a discount. The unrest in the world is due to the clouded intelligence of men who are not able to understand the secret of peace and blessedness. Spiritual life and inner freedom have practically become impossible for many, because the atmosphere in which people live is poisoned with sense-attractions and distracting elements. Blessed are the few who, in the midst of this uproar and agitation, have set their aim on perfection, and strive for it with discrimination and dispassion. They shall see the higher nature of the Lord.

The word '*sarvasya*' (to all) here should refer only to the ignorant. That the Lord is veild by *maya* is from the dualistic point only. *Paramatma* has no veil by which He is covered.

He is unclouded pure Supreme Intelligence. The veil is for the individual *Jiva* only. The clouds cannot at any time effect the sun. He is always bright and glorious. The covering of the clouds is from the view-point of those who are below the clouds. The same is the case with the Supreme Lord.

A different interpretation for the phrase "*Yogamaya-samavritah*" (Veiled by *Yogo Maya*) is given by some commentators. It is taken as a qualifying adjective to '*mudhah*' (the deluded). Then the meaning would be – the ignorant world veiled by the deluding power of *Maya* is not able to see the eternal nature of the Lord.

Question : *Why is the Lord not visible to all ?*

Answer : Since he is veiled by the *Yoga Maya.*

Question : *What is the real nature of the Lord ?*

Answer : He is birthless and eternal.

Question : *Who is not able to understand His real nature ?*

Answer : The ignorant.

Question : *Why ?*

Answer : Because they are not able to penetrate the veil of *Maya.*

Question : *What should the wise man do ?*

Answer : He should strive by intense spiritual *sadhana* to remove the obstructing veil and realise the Lord even in this very life.

The Omniscience of the Lord is declared.

26. वेदाहं समतीतानि वर्तमानानि चाऽर्जुन ।
भविष्याणि च भूतानि मां तु वेद न कश्चन ॥ २७

Veda'ham samatitani vartamanani cha'rjuna ।
bhavishyani cha bhutani mam tu veda'na kaschana ॥ 26

Meaning : अर्जुन *Arjuna :* O Arjuna ! अहम् *aham :* I, समतीतानि *samatitani :* the past, वर्तमानानिच *vartamanani cha ;* and the present, भविष्याणिच *bhavishani cha :* and the future, भूतानि *bhutani :* beings, वेद *veda :* know, मां तु *mam tu :* but Me, कश्चन *kaschana :* any, न वेद *na veda :* not knows.

Substance : O Arjuna ! I know the past, present and the future of all beings, but Me no one knows.

Commentary : The Omniscience of the Lord is here declared. All beings are in the womb of time, and time as the cosmic illusion, is in the Lord. As the whole universe from creation to dissolution is functioning in the Lord, there is nothing that He does not know. His eye is on all beings, past, present and future. Knowing this, how can man commit sin ?

By contrast with the Ominiscience of the Supreme Iswara, we understand the limited character of the individual *Jiva.* He is controlled by time. He is subject to death and change. He does not know the past or the future. His understanding is limited to very small things around him. Whereas the Lord is '*Sarvajna*' (omniscient) the individual *Jiva* is '*Kinchijna*' (of little knowledge). The Lord is eternal, beyond time, all-knowing. What is man after all in the presence of the Lord ? And yet this little man is proud of his strength, position, wealth, beauty and knowledge. He thinks that he is everything and thus has no thought of the Lord. This is the illusory power of *Maya* working on the human mind. He who knows the truth sings the infinite glory of the Lord with a hundred tongues. He prostrates himself before the Lord with deep faith and devotion. When a common mortal exhibits some ray of genius, people honour him and pay homage to him. That being so, what is the homage that man should pay to the Omniscient Lord with all His infinite power. It is the primary duty of man to contemplate the transcendental glory of the Lord, His omniscience, omnipotence, and His imperishable nature. Pride and egoism cannot have any place in the heart of the spiritual aspirant.

Mam tu Veda na Kaschana–No one knows me. This should refer to men of demonical nature who have no faith in the Lord,

who have no Self-knowledge and who are devoid of devotion. It is true that the Lord alone knows His full glory. The rest, the highest of his devotees, men of perfect knowledge, are one with Him. Standing at the screened window of his high palace, the King can see the crowds below, but not one of the crowd can see the King in the palace. So also, the Lord knows all beings, but very few know Him. Therefore it is the duty of man to understand his limitations and the unlimited power of the Lord, to have faith in Him, and to cross the ocean of *samsara* by His grace. As the rain drop merges in the ocean, so should the individual self merge in Him. This is *Moksha*, perfect freedom. Till then like the animal bound to the tether, man's life is limited by a thousand restricting influences.

Question : *What is the power of the Lord ?*

Answer : He knows the past, present and future. Few know him.

Ignorance causes attraction and revulsion (raga and dvesha) and by the pairs of opposites man is deluded.

27. इच्छाद्वेषसमुत्थेन द्वन्द्वमोहेन भारत ।
सर्वभूतानि संमोहं सर्गे यान्ति परंतप ॥ २७

Iccha dvesha samutthena dvandva mohena bharata ।
sarvabhutani sammoham sarge yanti paramtapa ॥ 27

Meaning : परन्तप *Parantapa* : O Arjuna ! भारत *Bharatha* : O Arjuna ! सर्गे *sarge* : from birth (in this world), इच्छाद्वेषसमुत्थेन *Icchadveshasamuthena* : arising from attraction and revulsion, द्वन्द्वमोहेन *dvandvamohena* : by the delusion caused by the pairs of opposites, सर्वभूतानि *sarvabhutani* : all beings, संमोहं *sammoham* : to delusion, यान्ति *yanti* : are subject.

Substance : O Arjuna ! By the delusion of the pairs of opposites caused by desire and aversion, all beings are subject to illusion in the world.

Commentary : All people are enveloped in ignorance from the time of birth. The Lord's *Yogamaya* casts her veil round the new-born baby in the cradle. It is deep and impenetrable darkness that shrouds the human being, preventing him from seeing the light of *Atma*. What is this delusion ? It is the delusion of the pairs of opposites like pleasure and pain, heat and cold, etc., arising from desire and aversion. Freedom from attraction and revulsion (*raga* and *dvesha*) will eliminate the pairs of opposites. When there is no desire to enjoy a particular object, there cannot be any pain resulting from the non-possession of that object, nor the hatred against those who stand in the way of such enjoyment. Desire agitates the mind and makes it restless, and a restless mind is far away from peace which is the only condition for Self-realisation. Even if the desire is fulfilled, the desire itself will not die with its gratification. It seeks for more and more enjoyment and there is no end to desires. So this subtle and powerful enemy should be fought with discrimination and dispassion and rooted out of the mind.

Dislike towards an unpleasant object is common to all. The mind constantly fluctuates between likes and dislikes. When a pleasing thing comes to a person he is happy, but soon after when something unpleasant occurs, he is pained. Thus the whole world is divided into two opposite extremes for the common man. So long as there is pleasure, there will be pain also. So long as there is joy there shall be unhappiness also. After very long experience, man discovers that he cannot have the one without the other, and his search for a painless pleasure is the fool's search for the hare's horn which does not exist. Then will he seek for that joy which is self-existent, which does not arise from external objects, the source of which is the very Self of man. There he finds a bliss which is uncontaminated; there he finds the light that has no shadow; there he finds the peace which nothing can disturb. This state must come to all sooner or later.

The cosmic illusion overtakes man even from the time of birth. As man grows, the illusion takes stronger hold on him. It is true that in childhood, desire and aversion are less powerful

and so spiritual *sadhana* should start even from childhood, before the mind is poisoned by worldly desires, ambitions, enjoyments and so on. All great *Mahatmas* have practised spiritual discipline from their childhood when the mind is not positively attached to worldly things.

Arjuna is addressed as the 'scorcher of enemies' for he has destroyed many of the powerful enemies, and so he should strive hard to root out the invisible foes who had taken possession of his heart.

All beings are under delusion at birth, but some awakened souls transcend the illusion by devotion and knowledge.

Question : *What is the source of the pairs of opposites ?*

Answer : Desire and aversion (*Raga* and *Dvesha*).

Question : *When does delusion overtake all beings ?*

Answer : Even at the time of birth.

Delusion ceases when sin is destroyed.

28. येषां त्वन्तगतं पापं जनानां पुण्यकर्मणाम् ।
ते द्वन्द्वमोहनिर्मुक्ता भजन्ते मां दृढव्रताः ॥ २८

Yesham tvantagatam papam jananam punyakarmanam ।
te dvandvamohanirmukta bhajante mam dhridhavratah ॥ 28

Meaning : पुण्यकर्मणाम् *punyakarmanam* : who do good work, **येषां जनानाम्** *yesham jananam* : of those people, **पापम् तु** ***papam tu*** : but sin, **अन्तगतम्** *antagatam* : is destroyed, **ते** ***te*** : they, **द्वन्द्वमोहनिर्मुक्ताः** *dvandvamohavinirmuktah* : freed from the delusion of the pairs of opposites, **दृढव्रताः** *dhridhavratah* : steadfast in vows, **माम्** *mam* : Me, **भजन्ते** *bhajante* : worship.

Substance : But those men of good works whose sin has come to an end, worship Me steadfast in vows, freed from the delusive pairs of opposites.

Commentary : Only the man who is steadfast in his vows can worship the Lord and understand His higher nature. Vows of silence, fasting, celibacy, study and others are practised by many for self-perfection. But to acquire steadfast discipline is difficult. The reason is that the mind is impure by accumulated sins of several births. This is the chief obstacle in spiritual life. As the dirty cloth cannot be dyed, as no seed grows in waste land, so also spiritual illumination does not arise in the heart of the sinful man. Sin is the manifestation of *'rajo guna'* and this does not allow man to remain still in the contemplation of the Self. The mind is turned outward to wander in the wilderness of the world.

So the mind should be washed pure. And this is possible by performing good deeds, 'Do *Punya karma* and destroy sin' – that is the Lord's command. The seeker should do good deeds continuously. Some charity, some service to suffering-humanity, some self–sacrifice for the sake of others, some *japa* and some kind of spiritual discipline should be done by him. This is the only way to eliminate sin. It is foolish to say that even good *Karma* binds. Bad can be removed only by good, and in the final stages of Realisation, both bad and good are left behind. But even after Realisation the Lord has ordained that good works should be continued for the sake of setting an example for humanity. The man of good deeds shall never fall to a low state says the Lord.

Those who have destroyed sin by good deeds, are freed from the delusive pairs of opposites, and worship the Lord with unswerving devotion. Thus they realise the Self and attain *Moksha*.

Vows firmly held and practised with a resolute spirit are necessary for progress. A weak and vascillating mind cannot achieve anything. The obstruction of *Maya* cannot be easily removed. The *Sadhaka* should fix the discipline and follow it. – "I will not touch food till I complete some *Japa*, and read a chapter of the Gita or Ramayana or some other sacred work." Thus he should determine and act.

Question : *Who can worship the Lord with steadfast vows ?*

Answer : The sinless.

Question : *How can sin be destroyed ?*

Answer : By performing good works.

Question : *What are the rewards of destroying sin ?*

Answer : The removal of the delusive pairs of opposites, and firmness in the contemplation of the Self.

The reward of firm faith and devotion to the Lord is declared.

29. जरामरणमोक्षाय मामाश्रित्य यतन्ति ये ।
ते ब्रह्म तद्विदुः कृत्स्नमध्यात्मं कर्म चाखिलम् ॥ २९

Jara marana mokshaya mamasritya yatanti ye ।
te brahma tad viduh kritsnamadhyatmam karma cha'khilam ॥ 29

Meaning : ये *ye :* those who, जरामरणमोक्षाय *jaramarana-mokshaya :* for freedom from old age and death, माम् *mam :* Me, आश्रित्य *asritya :* having taken refuge in, यतन्ति *yatanti :* strive, ते *te :* they, कृत्स्नम् *kritsnam :* the whole, अध्यात्मम् *adhyatmam :* Self-knowledge, अखिलम् कर्मच *akhilam karmacha :* and all action, तद् ब्रह्म *tat brahma :* to be That, Brahman, विदुः *viduh :* know.

Substance : Those who strive for liberation from old age and death, taking refuge in Me, realise in full that *Brahman*, the entire Self-knowledge and action.

Commentary : The individual strives for liberation from the ills and sorrows of life and for obtaining that bliss which is perfect. All spiritual practices and surrender to the Lord, have this freedom and perfection as the goal. As the seeker continues his practice, and as his *sadhana* becomes ripe, (i. e.) as he becomes a *Yogarudhah*, he will discover that all beings, all knowledge, all action, to be *Brahman*, and that there is nothing else but That. They see the whole life and universe as the Self, *Atma*, or *Brahman*.

The knowledge of *Brahman* does not come to all. Those who are awakened to the ills of life, who seek for liberation, who strive for it, who take refuge in the Lord, they alone understand the highest Truth-that the Self is *Brahman* and every thing is only That and nothing else. Man realises that his limited self is only a fiction, a myth and mirage, and what exists is only *Brahman*, and he is That *(Aham Brahmasmi)*

Asritya, yatanti : These two are the key-words of the verse. They go together, striving for liberation and surrendering to the Lord. Both these are necessary for *Brahma-Jnana*. When man strives for knowledge, God's grace helps him to know the right path and reach the goal.

Question : *For what should man take refuge in the Lord?*

Answer : For releasing himself from the bondage of age and death.

Question : *How does man realise God?*

Answer : By his effort in the practice of spiritual *sadhana*.

Question : *What is his reward?*

Answer : By his own *sadhana* and by surrender to the Lord he realises *Brahman* the culmination of all knowledge and action.

30. साधिभूताधिदैवं मां साधियज्ञं च ये विदुः ।
प्रयाणकालेऽपि च मां ते विदुर्युक्तचेतसः ॥ ३०

Sadhibhutadhidaivam mam sadhiyajnam cha ye viduh ।
prayanakale 'picha mam te viduryuktachetasah ॥ 30

Meaning : ये *ye :* who, साधिभूताधिदैवम् *sadhubhutadidaivam:* with the Adhibhuta and Adhidaiva together, साधियज्ञं च *sadhiyajnam cha :* and with Adhiyajna together, माम् *mam :* Me, विदुः *viduh :* know, ते *te :* they, प्रयाणकालेऽपि च *prayana-*

kalepi cha : even at the time of death also, युक्तचेतसः *yukta chetasah :* steadfast in mind, माम् *Mam :* Me, विदुः *viduh :* know.

Substance : Those who know Me with the *Adhibhuta* (pertaining to elements, the world of objects), *Adhidaiva* (pertaining to the Gods) and the *Adhiyajna* (pertaining to the sacrifice) know Me even at the time of death, having self-control.

Commentary : When the seeker attains *Brahmajnana,* he understands that everything pertaining to the elements, the Gods, and the sacrifices, is all comprehended by *Brahman.* He retains that experience even at the time of death. All indeed is *Brahman* and the Self is *Brahman.* Such knowledge is acquired through a whole life-time of *sadhana,* and that experience 'I am *Brahman*' is remembered at the moment of death also. If one fills the mind with worldly thoughts, those very thoughts occur at the time of death. If he is merged in the highest realisation, that memory will be powerful at the time of the dissolution of the body.

That is why it is declared here that the man of self-control 'Yuktachetasa' alone can retain that knowledge at the time of death. It does not mean that the memory of the Lord should be held only at the last moment. When man is healthy and strong, when the body is fresh and vigorous, all spiritual *sadhana* should be done and realisation attained. It is only then that the memory of the blissful experience remains fresh in the mind even at the last moments. As the moment of death is unknown, it follows that spiritual life should be completed when the body is in a fit condition. The Lord gives no concession to the idlers and the negligent. Besides this the responsibility is placed fully on the personal effort of man for self-realisation. Otherwise, man is likely to live in a fool's pradise, that some great experience would come to him of its own accord. Every seeker should understand clearly that his own effort will bring down God's grace to help him towards final realisation.

The terms *Adhibhuta, Adhidaiva* and *Adhiyajna* are explained in the next Discourse.

इति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे
श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे विज्ञानयोगो नाम
सप्तमोऽध्यायः ॥

Iti Srimad Bhagavadgitasupanishatsu brahmavidyayam yogasastre Sri Krishnarjuna samvade Vijnana Yogo nama saptamo'dhyayah.

Thus, in the Upanishads of the Bhagavad Gita, the Science of the Eternal, the Scripture of *Yoga,* the dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna ends The Seventh Discourse entitled
Vijnana Yoga
(The *Yoga* of wisdom)

ॐ

श्री भगवद्गीता

SRI BHAGAVAD GITA

अथ अष्टमोऽध्यायः

Atha Ashtamodhyayah

EIGHTH DISCOURSE

अक्षरपरब्रह्मयोगः

AKSHARA PARABRAHMA YOGA

THE YOGA OF IMPERISHABLE BRAHMAN

I. The title of the Discourse :

'Kshara' means that which perishes. 'Akshara' means that which does not perish, the Imperishable. Since the Discourse deals with the Imperishable Brahman it is entitled 'Aksharaparabrahma Yoga.'

II. Main Points of the Discourse :

1) Arjuna's questions and the Lord's answer. (1–8)

2) The practice of *Pranava* and its wonderful effects. (9–16)

3) Explanation of creation and dissolution. (17–19)

4) The universal form of the Lord and how the devotee attains it. (20–22)

5) The paths of the dark and light – fortnights of the moon. (23–26)

6) The power of the Yogi. (27–28)

III. How this Discourse is connected with the previous one :

At the end of the previous Discourse, the Lord said that those who take refuge in Him and strive for liberation from old age and death would even at the time of death know all of *Brahman* which comprehends the *Adhyatma*, *Adibhuta*, and *Adhiyajna*. Arjuna wanted to know what was meant by *Adhyatma*, *Adhibhuta* etc., and so this Discourse starts with seven separate questions put by him to the Lord.

अर्जुन उवाच

1. किं तद्ब्रह्म किमध्यात्मं किं कर्म पुरुषोत्तम ।
अधिभूतं च किं प्रोक्तमधिदैवं किमुच्यते ॥ १

2. अधियज्ञः कथं कोऽत्र देहेऽस्मिन्मधुसूदन ।
प्रयाणकाले च कथं ज्ञेयोऽसि नियतात्मभिः ॥ २

Arjuna uvacha

Kim tad brahma kim adhyatmam
kim karma purushothama ।
adhibhutam cha kim proktam
adhidaivam kim uchyate ॥ 1

Adhiyajnah katham ko'tra dehe'smin madhusudana ।
prayanakale cha katham jneyo'si niyatatmabhih ॥ 2

अर्जुन उवाच *Arjuna Uvacha* : Arjuna said.

Meaning : पुरुषोत्तम *Purushothama* : O best among men! तत् ब्रह्म *tat Brahma* : that Brahman, किम् *kim* : what, अध्यात्मम् *adhyatmam* : Adhyatma, किम् *kim* : what, कर्म *karma* : action, किम् *kim* : what, अधिभूतम् *adhibhutam* : Adhibhuta, किंच *kim cha* : and what, प्रोक्तम् *proktam* : is said, अधिदैवम् *adhidaivam* : Adhidaiva, किम् *kim* : what, उच्यते *uchyate* : is said, मधुसूदन *Madhusudana* : O Krishna! अस्मिन् देहे *asmin dehe* : in this body, अधियज्ञः *Adhiyajnah* : Adhiyajna, कः *kah* : who, अत्र *atra* : here, कथम् *katham* : how, प्रयाणकालेच

prayanakalecha : and at the time of death, नियतात्मभिः *niyatatmabhih :* by the self-controlled, कथम् *katham :* how, ज्ञेयः *jneyah :* knowable, असि *asi :* are you.

Substance : Arjuna said : What is that *Brahman* ? What is the *Adhyatma* ? What is action ? What is declared to be the *Adhibhuta* ? And what is *Adhidaiva* said to be ? O best among men ?

O Krishna ! Who and how is *Adhiyajna* here in this body ? And how at the time of death are you to be known by the self-controlled ?

Commentary : The Lord answers the first six questions briefly and elaborates His answer to the last in this Discourse.

1) What is Brahman ?
2) What is Adhyatma ?
3) What is Karma ?
4) What is Adhibhuta ?
5) What is Adhidaiva ?
6) What is Adhiyajna ?
7) How and in what manner is the Lord known by the self-controlled at the time of death ?

श्री भगवानुवाच

3. अक्षरं ब्रह्म परमं स्वभावोऽध्यात्ममुच्यते ।
भूतभावोद्भवकरो विसर्गः कर्मसंज्ञितः ॥ ३

Sri Bhagavan uvacha

Aksharam brahma paramam svabhavo'dhyatmam uchyate
bhutabhavodbhavakaro visargah karmasamjnitah 3

श्री भगवानुवाच – *Sri Bhagavan Uvacha :* The blessed Lord said.

Meaning : परमम् *Paramam :* supreme, अक्षरम् *aksharam :* imperishable, ब्रह्म *brahma :* (is) Brahman, स्वभावः *svabhavah :*

its nature, अध्यात्मम् *adhyatmam :* self-knowledge, उच्यते *uchyate:* is called, भूतभावोद्भवकरः *bhutabhavodbhavakarah :* the emanation that causes the birth of beings, विसर्गः *visargah :* act of sacrifice, oblation to the Gods in sacrifice, कर्मसंज्ञितः *karmasamjnitah :* is named karma.

Substance : The blessed Lord said : *Brahman* is supreme, impreishable. Its essential nature is called *Adhyatma* (Self-knowledge); the act of sacrifice that causes the birth of beings is named *karma* (action).

Commentary : Three questions are answered in this verse. First, what is *Brahman* ? The Supreme and the imperishable is *Brahman.* Two attributes are mentioned here – supreme (*Paramam*) and imperishable (*Aksahram*). There is nothing other than or superior to *Brahman.* The One above and beyond which there is nothing else is *Brahman.* That is why it is described to be supreme *Paramam. Brahman* is imperishable, deathless. Since it is deathless it cannot be said to be born. The whole universe is constantly changing and going through the process of creation and dissolution in an endless chain. Birth and death is the law of nature, and there is only One that is birthless and deathless and that is *Brahman.* It is the seer (*Drik*), and so is indestructible. Destruction is only spoken of the seen (*Drisya*), and not of the seer (*Drik*). *Brahman* is indivisible, unaffected by time, space and causation.

To the second question–'What is *Adhyatma* ?'–the answer given is nature (*svabhava*) One's nature is *svabhava* (i. e.) the real Self of man, distinct from the superimposed body, mind, and senses. Out of ignorance, man thinks that he is the body and the mind, and that is his real nature. It is an error. When knowledge dawns, one knows that he is the Self, *Atma,* uncontaminated by the body, mind and the senses. So long as man identifies himself with the elements, which are subject to change and death, he cannot be happy. True happiness is only in the Self, pure, perfect, and imperishable.

The third question is 'What is *Karma* ?' The answer is 'an act of sacrifice', which is the cause of the birth of beings. This is *yajna*. By *yajna*, rains are produced and from rains, food and from food all beings are born. The word '*Visarga*' here means that which is given away or that which is offered as sacrifice to the Gods in the sacred Fire of the *Yajna*. In charity (*Dana*), wealth is sacrificed. Service to mankind in any form is an act of sacrifice. This also is ***Yajna***, and it leads to ***Moksha***.

Question : *What is Brahman ?*

Answer : The indestructible and the supreme **Being** is ***Brahman***.

Question : *What is Adhyatma ?*

Answer : The true Self of man.

Question : *What is Karma ?*

Answer : That act of sacrifice which **causes the emanation** of beings is *Karma*.

4. अधिभूतं क्षरो भावः पुरुषश्चाधिदैवतम् ।
अधियज्ञोऽहमेवात्र देहे देहभृतां वर ॥ ४

Adhibhutam ksharo bhavah purushascha'dhidaivatam ।
adhiyajno'hameva' tra dehe dehabhritam vara ॥ 4

Meaning: देहभृतांवर *dehabhritamvara :* O best of embodied beings Arjuna! क्षरः *ksharah :* perishable, भावः *bhavah :* element, अधिभूतम् *adhibhutam :* Adhibhuta, पुरुषश्च *purushah :* the creative energy (Hiranyagarbha or Virat), अधिदैवतम् *adhidaivatam :* (is) Adhidaiva, अत्र देहे *atra dehe :* here in this body, अहमेव *aham eva :* I Myself (Paramatma), अधियज्ञः *adhiyajnah :* (called) Adhiyajna.

Substance : O Arjuna ! The perishable element is *Adhibhuta*; *Hiranyagarbha* or *Viratpurusha* is *Adhidaiva*, and here in the body I Myself am the *Adhiyajna*.

Commentary : As the Lord declares that He dwells in the body as *Adhiyajna*, He is most near to every being. The Lord is not far away either in the sky or in the underworld. He permeates the body with his invisible presence. So it is man's duty to discover Him by close self-examination. As the Lord is very near to all, no one should be hated or looked down with contempt. The divinity of man is thus declared by the Lord.

Arjuna is addressed here as '*dehabhritamvara*' implying that man holds the body, but he is certainly not the body.

Question : *What is Adhibhuta ?*

Answer : The perishable element, all the objective universe is called *Adhibhuta*.

Question : *What is Adhidaiva ?*

Answer : Viratpurusha or Hiranyagarbha.

Question : *What is Adhiyajna ?*

Answer : Lord Krishna-*Paramatma* is Himself the ***Adhiyajna*** in this body.

The Lord now elaborates the theme of God-Consciousness at the time of death.

5. अन्तकाले च मामेव स्मरन्मुक्त्वा कलेवरम् ।
यः प्रयाति स मद्भावं याति नास्त्यत्र संशयः ॥ ५

Antakale cha mameva smaran muktva kalebaram ।
yah prayati sa madbhavam yati na'styatra samsayah ॥ 5

Meaning : यः *yah :* who, अन्तकालेच *antakalecha :* at the moment of death also, मामेव *mam eva :* Me only, स्मरन् *smaran :* thinking, कलेवरम् *kalebaram :* body, मुक्त्वा *muktva :* leaving, प्रयाति *prayati :* goes, सः *sah :* he, मद्भावम् *madbhavam :* My Being, याति *yat :* attains, अत्र *atra :* in this, संशयः *samsayah :* doubt, नास्ति *na asti :* is not.

Substance. He who casts off the body at the time of death, and goes forth remembering Me only, attains My Being; there is no doubt in this.

Commentary: The Lord here explains how He is remembered by the self-controlled *yogi* at the time of death.

Antakalecha: It is declared that whoever thinks of the Lord at the moment of death also, attains His being. The word 'also' ('*cha*') has to be carefully understood. '*Cha*' means '*also*'. The seeker has to think of the Lord not only during his life-time but at the moment of death also. The Lord did not say that He should be remembered '*only*' at the time of death. That would be quite encouraging to all idlers and wicked men. Of course, even to remember the Lord at the time of death is also an act of merit. But such memory is impossible to retain at the moment of death, unless by long and steady practice, the mind is saturated with divine thoughts. Mostly people die thinking of their property, wife or children, because their minds were filled with those thoughts during a long life-time. So the Lord emphasises the idea of rembering Him at all time, both in life and in death.

Those who have spent a whole life-time in spiritual *sadhana* can retain the memory of the Lord at the last moment. The exceptions are very rare. If a man wants to play some role in a drama, he goes through months of training, memorising his part. To pass an examination, a long period of preparation is necessary. It is within one's own experience that what he thinks of intensely in the waking state comes up as a dream in sleep. In old age, at the moment of death, the functions of the body and mind will be at a low ebb and most people pass away in an unconscious state. So intense *sadhana* during a whole life-time is essential for attaining the Lord by fixing the mind on Him at the time of death.

The power of *Maya* is inscrutable. At any time it may overtake the person if he is negligent. So till the last breath one has to be vigilent. To sink in the ocean having come within a few yards of the shore or to fall off from the ladder

having touched the last rung, would be a disaster. Having kept away delusion for long, but yielding to it at the last moment is foolish. So the Lord exhorts all mankind to keep the light of knowledge bright till the moment of death.

In the *Yogavasishta*, the sage Vasista advise s Rama to be watchful and vigilent.

Lust (*Kama*) easily devours the mind of the distracted man. But the demon can do nothing to the man whose mind is gathered up in *Yoga*.

Me only: "Think of Me only" is the Lord's command. Nothing can save man from the bonds of *samsara* except the one-pointed absorption in the Supreme Lord. If man wants peace and perfection let him seek refuge in the Lord only. He gives *Moksha*.

The reward of devotion to the Lord at the last moment is that he attains union with the Lord. This is liberation, self-realisation, *Moksha*. He does not come again under the power of *samsara*. He reaches the Eternal. The Lord says, out of infiinite compassion, "Have faith in Me. I will save you from all the ills and perils of *samsara*." So, having full faith in the Lord, and abandoning all small gains and profits in this or other worlds, let the seeker aim at the highest perfection and reach it by contiuous devotion to the Lord.

Question : *What should be the attitude of man at the time of death?*

Answer : He should think of the Lord and nothing else.

Question : *What is the result?*

Answer : He attains the Lord.

Question : *What then is man's duty?*

Answer : To remember the Lord in life and in death.

The future path of man is determined by what he thinks at the moment of death.

6. यं यं वापि स्मरन्भावं त्यजत्यन्ते कलेवरम् ।
तं तमेवैति कौन्तेय सदा तद्भावभावितः ॥ ६

Yam-yam va'pi smaran bhavam tyajatyante kalebaram ।
tam-tamevai'ti kaunteya sada tadbhavabhavitah ॥ 6

Meaning : कौन्तेय *Kaunteya :* O Arjuna ! अन्ते *ante :* at the last moment, यं यं वापि भावं *yam yam vapi bhavam :* what-so-ever thought or form even, स्मरन् *smaran :* thinking, कलेवरम् *kalebaram :* body, त्यजति (सः) *tyajati (sah) :* leaves (he), सदा *sada :* always, तद्भावभावितः *tadbhavabhavitah :* conformed to that thought in nature, तं तमेव *tam tam eva :* to that object, or form, or thought only, एति *eti :* goes.

Substance : O Arjuna! Who-so-ever leaves the body thinking of what-so-ever object, form, or being at the end, to that only he goes, conformed in nature to that.

Commentary : Whatever a man thinks and contemplates frequently, that becomes a tendency-*samskara* which holds the mind enslaved by ill-power and momentum. So it is said that whatever form or object the dying man thinks, that he will obtain when he takes a new birth. The sage Jadabharata in spite of his great *tapas* was attached to a fawn which he protected and when he passed away, the thought of the fawn filled his mind. Consequently he was born as a deer. As one thinks so he becomes (*Yadbhavam tadbhavati*). This being the law, every thoughtful man should be extremely careful to choose and select only noble and spiritual thoughts to fill the mind. This should be practised throughout one's life, so that they should be uppermost in the mind at the time of death. As all other things in the world are pain-causing, sorrow-breeding, the wise man naturally thinks of the Blessed Lord as the be-all and end-all of his life. Thus man attains the supreme state. Devotion, *Dhyana*, study, company of the wise, charity, all these should be practised truthfully and by so doing, divine thoughts permeate the mind and determine the future birth of man.

That is why spirited *sadhana* is prescribed from childhood when the mind is pure and free from the poisonous ugliness of worldly life. Every man is himself responsible for his freedom or bondage. "If one thinks that he is free, free he is this moment. If he thinks he is bound, bound he should be." Either high birth or low birth or freedom from birth and death, all these depend on man's mental frame. And this frame of mind is forged by long practice throughout life. The good *samskaras* would re-assert themselves in the next birth and lead him to the goal.

Question: *What shall be the nature of the future birth for man?*

Answer : It is determined by that idea or object which dominates the mind at the time of death.

Question : *How can man retain spiritual thought at the last moment ?*

Answer : By a whole life-time of *sadhana.*

The need for constant remembrance of the Lord is declared ?

7. तस्मात्सर्वेषु कालेषु मामनुस्मर युध्य च ।
मय्यर्पितमनोबुद्धिर्मामेवैष्यस्यसंशयः ॥ ७

Tasmat sarveshu kaleshu mam anusmara yudhya cha ।
mayyarpita manobuddhir mamevai'shyasyasamsayah ॥ 7

Meaning : तस्मात् *tasmat :* therefore, सर्वेषु कालेषु *sarveshu kaleshu :* at all times, माम् *mam :* Me, अनुस्मर *anusmara :* remember, युध्यच *yudhya cha :* and fight (perform your duty), मयि *mayi :* in Me, अर्पित *arpita :* surrendered, मनोबुद्धिः *manobudhih :* mind and intellect, मामेव *mam eva :* Me alone, एष्यसि *eshyasi :* you shall attain, असंशयः *asamsayah :* undoubtedly.

Substance : Therefore, remember Me at all times and fight, surrendering your mind and intellect in Me. You shall attain Me alone, without doubt.

Commentary : This verse seems to be a commentary on the previous one in which it is declared that the devotee who shall think of Him at the moment of death will attain Him. Here the Lord clarifies the declaration by stating that it is the duty of the devotee to think of Him at all times. It is implied that unless a man thinks of Him always, he cannot retain that blissful memory at the time of death.

It is the lamp that keeps away darkness. When the lamp is put out, darkness envelopes everything. The darkness of ignorance is ready to possess the heart of man if the lamp of knowledge is not kept burning continuously. It is only the thought of the Lord that keeps away delusion. When that thought is not there, delusion immediately seizes man. Therefore remember Me at all times–is the Lord's command.

Anusmara : Continuous thought of the Supreme should be kept up. Hearing of the Lord, thinking of Him, meditating on Him, the seeker should not let go his hold of the Lord at any time. Such a man need not bother whether death comes sooner or later. Having purchased the ticket, it does not matter when the train comes ! Let death come when it will, the seeker is ready with the Lord's name on his lips and His thought in the mind.

If all the time the seeker is thinking of the Lord, how can he get on in the world? When does he find time to look after the practical duties of life ? This question is asked by many people. Most people also make it an excuse that they are not able to think of God because of pressing domestic duties. To such people the Lord here gives the advice. "Think of Me and perform your duties." Arjuna's duty on the battle–field was to fight. For each man as he is placed in the various stations and circumstances of life, there will be particular duties and they should be performed while keeping the thought of the Lord in the mind.

The declaration of the Lord proves that the *Gita Sastra* is not the philosophy of mendicants, escapists, idlors and cowards. It is the doctrine that unites practical life with the

highest realisation'. Reamember me and do your duty ("*Mam anusmara yudhya cha.*")–This is one of the central teachings of Gita.

The mind generates thought and intellect approves and confiirms it. So one should think of the Lord both with mind and intellect. These two faculties of the mind should be fixed in or surrendered to the Lord.

Asamsayah : The Lord affirms His declaratian and excludes all doubts and fears from the mind of his devotees. So it is the duty of all aspirants to have faith in the Lord's command, do spiritual *sadhana* and attain Him.

Question : *When should one think of God* ?

Answer : Always and ever.

Question : *What about man's worldly duties* ?

Answer : He should perform them and at the same time think of the Lord.

Question : *What is the way to attain the Lord* ?

Answer : Surrendering the mind and intellect to Him.

The way of meditating on the Supreme is explained.

8. अभ्यासयोगयुक्तेन चेतसा नान्यगामिना ।
परमं पुरुषं दिव्यं याति पार्थानुचिन्तयन् ॥ ८

Abhyasayogayuktena chetasa na'nyagamina ।
paramam purusham divyam yati partha'nuchintayan ॥ 8

Meaning : पार्थ *Partha :* O Arjuna! अभ्यासयोगयुक्तेन *abhyasa–yogayuktena :* harmonised by practice of yoga, नान्यगामिना *nanyagamina :* not going towards other objects, चेतसा *chetasa :* with mind, दिव्यम् *divyam :* divine, परमम् *paramam :* supreme, पुरुषम् *purusham :* Lord (Atma), अनुचिन्तयन् *anu–chintayan :* meditating, याति *yati :* attains.

Substance: O Arjuna! With mind not going towards other objects, harmonised by the practice of *yoga*, meditating constantly, one reaches the Supreme Resplendent *Purusha*.

Commentary: In this verse three definite practices are mentioned to reach the Supreme Lord.

1. The practice of *yoga*.
2. The mind should not swerve from the Lord, as the supreme goal.
3. One should meditate on the Lord continuously.

1) The Lord has elevated 'practice' (*abhyasa*) to the state of a *yoga*, like *Karma yoga*, *Jnana yoga* etc. No other *yoga* can bear fruit without being supported by *abhysa yoga*. In the 6th Discourse the Lord has already referred to practice ('*Abhyasa*') as the primary method of controlling the mind.

In the practical field of work we understand the need for systematic practice. In sport and art, practice is essential for perfection. In fact, practice is nothing else than the repetition of the mode of thought or act. Any act repeated many times becomes a habit. All the bad habits have been the accumulated effect of wrong practice. If practice is done in the right direction, good thoughts and acts become natural and spontaneous. When one comes across a person who is pure in thought, word and deed, he admires him, and sometimes wonder how he could be so pure. But he should realise how he had laid the foundations of purity by long *abhyasa yoga*. All the impurities and weaknesses arising from previous births are overcome by steadfast practice of goodness and purity in this life. Whatever may be the *yoga* that the seeker chooses to follow, it should be first and last combined with '*abhyasa yoga*.' Then alone it would yield good results, just as purifying powders work on the human body only when they are mixed with water.

2) The second thing is that the man should not move away from the ideal. The aim is *Atma*, and the mind should

therefore be centered in the *Atma*, and not allowed to move out towards material objects. Whatever appears ('*anatma*') perishes. Knowing this, through discrimination one should hold fast to *Atma* alone. As the mind by its nature can only hold on some form it should be given some divine object or form which it can easily cling to. So it is said here that one should meditate on the Supreme Divine Lord (*Paramam Purusham Divyam*).

Anuchintayan: The Lord commands the disciple to think of Him (*Atma*) again and again, and yet again. So thinking continuously, man reaches the supreme state. Having full faith in the teaching of the Lord, may all the spiritual aspirants fulfil their life's purpose.

Question: *What is the nature of Paramatma?*

Answer: He is Supreme, Self-effulgent, and Divine.

Question: *What is the way to reach Him?*

Answer: Restraining the mind from going out towards sense-objects; remembering Him continuously is the way to reach Him.

Question: *How should the mind be restrained?*

Answer: It should remain steadfast in *Atma* alone, and not turn away from it.

The object of meditation, the method of meditation, and its results are described.

9. कविं पुराणमनुशासितारमणोरणीयांसमनुस्मरेद्यः ।
सर्वस्य धातारमचिन्त्यरूपमादित्यवर्णं तमसः परस्तात् ॥ ९

10. प्रयाणकाले मनसाऽचलेन भक्त्या युक्तो योगबलेन चैव ।
भ्रुवोर्मध्ये प्राणमावेश्य सम्यक् स तं परं पुरुषमुपैति दिव्यम् ॥ १०

Kavim puranam anusasitaram
anoraniyamsam anusmaredyah ।
sarvasya dhataram achintya rupam
adityavarnam tamasah parastat ।

Prayanakale manasa'chalena
bhaktya yukto yogabalena chai'va ।
bhruvormadhye pranam avesya samyak
sa tam param purusham upaiti divyam ॥ 10

Meaning : यः *yah* : who, भक्त्या युक्तः *bhaktyayuktah* : with devotion, प्रयाणकाले *prayanakale* : at the time of death, योगबलेन *yogabalena*: by the power of yogic practice, प्राणम् *pranam* : vital breath, भ्रुवोर्मध्ये *bhruvah madhye* : in the centre of the brows, सम्यक् *samyak* : well, आवेश्य *avesya* : established, च *cha* : and, कविम् *kavim* : the omniscient, पुराणम् *puranam* : ancient, अनुशासितारं *anusasitaram* : the controller of all, अणोः *anoh* : than atom, अणीयांसम् *aniyamsam* : more subtle, सर्वस्य *sarvasya* : of all, धातारम् *dhataram* : supporter (nourisher, protector,) अचिन्त्यरूपम् *achintyarupam* : inconceivable form, आदित्यवर्णम् *adityavarnam* : self-effulgent like the sun, तमसः *tamasah* : from the darkness, परस्तात् *parastat* : beyond, पुरुषम् *purusham* : Paramatma, अचलेन मनसा *achalena manasa* : with immoveable mind, अनुस्मरेत् *anusmaret* : thinks continuously, सः *sah* : he, दिव्यम् *divyam* : self-illuminating, परम् *param* : supreme, तं एव *tam eva* : that only, उपैति *upaiti* : attains.

Substance : Who, at the time of leaving the body, by the power of yogic practice, fixes the vital breath in the centre of the brows, and thinks continuously of the Omniscient, the Ancient, the controller of all the worlds, subtler than atom, supporter of all, of inconceivable form, self-illumined like the sun, beyond darkness – he attains the self-illumined *Paramatma.*

Commentary : The Lord describes the different aspects of *Paramatma* and points the way of meditation. It is necessary to know the attributes of the Supreme for strengthening and confirming one's faith in Him. Naturally people can only think of that about which something is known. So in the 9th verse eight attributes of the Supreme are mentioned.

1) The Lord is Omniscient, the poet of poets; to know Him is the highest poetic experience.

2) He is the Ancient, without a beginning. All other beings have a beginning and so they have an end also. *Paramatma* is Eternal.

3) He is the Lord and Controller of all the worlds. What should be one's devotion to Him compared with the respect that one has for small princes of earthly states !

4) The Upanishads declare that he is smaller than the atom and bigger than the biggest. Therefore knowing that the Lord is present in every thing big and small, one should have a devotional attitude to every thing in the world.

5) He is beyond the senses and cannot be comprehended by the mind. But the purified mind, by contemplation becomes one with Him, even as the rivers when they merge in the sea lose their separateness and become one with the ocean. The purified mind knows Him by being united with Him. There is no other way to know the Lord.

7) He is Light. It is his Light that illumines the sun and everything else.

8) He is beyond the darkness of ignorance, beyond *Maya.*

Man when he leaves the body, should contemplate *Paramatma* by understanding Him through these eight attributes. Here death is described as travel to a distant place (*Prayana*). Just as man secures all necessary things before he starts on a travel, even so he should provide himself with all the best qualities before he leaves the body.

Thus during the last moments also man should contemplate *Paramatma* with *Bhakti* and *Yoga*. Both are essential for *Dhyana*. *Bhakti* is necessary to destroy egoism and secure the grace of God. *Yoga* is necessary to restrain the senses and mind for the purpose of meditating on the Supreme. Also, the mind should be immovable and the meditation continuous.

The reward for this is absolute freedom – *Moksha.*

Question : *What attributes of Paramatma are mentioned here ?*

Answer : He is Omniscient, ancient, the Controller of all the worlds, subtler than atom, supporter of all, inconceivable in form, self-illuminating like the Sun, shining beyond all darkness.

Question : *How should one meditate on Him at the time of leaving the body ?*

Answer : With steady mind, with devotion, and with *yogic* power holding the vital breath in the centre of the brows, one should meditate.

Question : *What is the result ?*

Answer : He attains the state of *Paramatma.*

Question : *So what is the way to attain Him ?*

Answer : Devotion and *Yoga.*

The excellence of the Supreme state is declared.

11. यदक्षरं वेदविदो वदन्ति विशन्ति यद्यतयो वीतरागाः ।
यदिच्छन्तो ब्रह्मचर्यं चरन्ति तत्ते पदं संग्रहेण प्रवक्ष्ये ॥ ११

Yad aksharam vedavido vadanti
visanti yadyatayo vitaragah ।
yadicchanto brahmacharyam charanti
tatte padam samgrahena pravakshye ॥ 11

Meaning : वेदविदः *vedavidah :* the knowers of Vedas, यत् *yat :* which, अक्षरम् *aksharam :* imperishable, वदन्ति *vadanti :* declare, वीतरागाः *vitaragah :* freed from desire, यतयः *yatayah :* the Self–controlled ascetics, यत् *yat :* which, विशन्ति *visanti :* enter, यत् *yat :* which, इच्छन्तः *icchantah :* desiring, ब्रह्मचर्यम् *brahmacharyam :* the vow of celibacy, चरन्ति *charanti :* practise, तत् पदम् *tat padam :* that state, goal, ते *te :* to you, संग्रहेण *sangrahena :* in brief, प्रवक्ष्ये *pravakshe :* I will declare.

Substance : Which the knowers of Vedas declare imperishable, which the self–controlled ascetic freed from desire enter, desiring which men practise the vow of celibacy, that goal I will declare to you in brief.

Commentary : The Lord says that He would declare the Supreme briefly. The Supreme has no end and as no words can fully describe it, so the Lord gives the very essence of the Vedas, and the worship of the Supreme as the simple single syllable OM – *Pranava.*

The Vedas declare that *Brahman* alone is Eternal. Everything else is transitory and changing. It is this Reality that man has to understand and realise. Knowledge of all other things cannot confer the bliss of immortality. In Hinduism every child when he starts his education, begins with the sacred word OM, which is *Brahman.* So whatever else a man may learn and understand, he should not neglect the knowledge of the Imperishable *Brahman.* The knowers of Vedas, after a great deal of thought, have arrived at the highest goal *Brahman*, and thus attained absolute peace and bliss.

Who can enter this state ? This question is also answered here. Only those who are free from attachment and desire, free from lust and hatred, can enter the *Brahmi* State. Let no man complain that he cannot attain that state. The key to this consummation is in his hands. It is purity. Let the mind be purged of all impure tendencies, and that very moment *Brahman* is realised.

Those who practise severe austerities, restraining the senses and controlling the mind are qualified and fit to realise *Brahman*.

Celibacy is the bedrock for all spiritual development. Those who aspire for the highest should be free from sensuality in thought, word and deed. They should live and move in *Brahman*, the pure and blessed untainted by anything else.

The Lord uses the emphatic term *'Pravakshye'* to indicate the importance of *Brahma–Vidya* which he teaches to His disciple and through him to all mankind.

Question : *What is the state of Paramatma ?*

Answer : He is imperishable.

Question : *Who knows Him ?*

Answer : The knowers of *Veda.*

Question : *Who enters that state ?*

Answer : Those who are freed from desire and who practise celebacy.

Question : *Then, What is the way to attain Him ?*

Answer : Destruction of the *Vasanas* and the practice of *Brahmacharya.*

The Lord explains the process of meditating on Pranava-OM.

12. सर्वद्वाराणि संयम्य मनो हृदि निरुध्य च ।
मूर्ध्न्याधायात्मनः प्राणमास्थितो योगधारणाम् ॥ १२

13. ओमित्येकाक्षरं ब्रह्म व्याहरन्मामनुस्मरन् ।
यः प्रयाति त्यजन्देहं स याति परमां गतिम् ॥ १३

Sarvadvarani samyamya mano hridi nirudhya cha ।
murdhnyadhaya'tmanah pranam asthito yogadharanam ॥ 12

Aum ityekaksharam brahma vyaharan mam anusmaran ।
yah prayati tyajan deham sa yati paramam gatim ॥ 13

Meaning : यः *yah :* who, सर्वद्वाराणि *sarvadvarani :* all the gate-ways of the senses, संयम्य *samyamya:* having restrained, मनः *manah :* mind, हृदि *hridi :* in heart, निरुध्य च *nirudhya cha:* and held, मूर्ध्नि *murdhini :* with head (Brahma Randhra), प्राणम् *pranam :* vital breath, आधाय *adhaya :* having placed, आत्मनः योगधारणाम् *Atmanah yogadharanam :* practice of concentration of the self, आस्थितः *Asthithah :* established (in), ब्रह्म *brahma :* Brahman, ओम् इति *aum iti :* OM thus, एकाक्षरम् *ekaksharam :* one-syllabled, व्याहरन् *vyaharan :* uttering, माम् *Mam :* Me, अनुस्मरन् *anusmaran :* remembering, देहम् *deham :* body, त्यजन् *tyajan :* leaving, प्रयाति *prayathi :* departs, सः *sah :* he, परमां गतिम् *paramam gatim :* highest goal, याति *yati :* attains.

Substance : Who having restrained all the gates of the senses, fixing the mind in *Atma*, holding the vital breath in the head, concentrating on *Atma* by *yogic* practice, repeating the sacred syllable OM which is *Brahman*, remembers Me at the time of leaving the body, he attains the supreme goal.

Commentary : The process of meditating on OM and attaining final liberation is explained here. It does not mean that one should follow it only at the time of death. It means that one should practise this method throughout life and remain in that state even at the time of death.

Without closing the gateways of the senses, the mind cannot be turned inwards to concentrate on *Atma*. The frame of knowledge may easily be put out by the winds of sense-attractions if the gateways are kept open. Here it is said that 'all' the senses should be restrained. The restraint should be complete and perfect. It should be understood that without sense-restraint, no other *sadhana* is possible.

Already the Lord has declared–"First restrain the senses." As the tortoise withdraws all its organs into its shell, so should the *yogi* withdraw all the senses from their usual external activities in the objective world.

Then the mind should be centred in the heart, in *Atma*. The heart, *Atma*, is the source from which the mind arises. So the mind should be turned back to its own source. When the senses are controlled, the mind naturally loses its roving nature and sinks into its own source.

The mind should think of *Paramatma* in a continuous stream of unbroken consciousness.

What is the '*mantra*' for meditation ? The one-syllable OM, which is *Brahman*. OM is *Pranava*. It is the esence of the

Vedas. It is not enough merely to utter the word OM but one should think of the Lord. It means that the idea symbolised by the word OM should be thought of. Mere verbal repetition of a '*mantra*' without thinking of its meaning, will not yield the best results. If a cannon is filled with powder without the shell, it will cause a noisy explosion only, but the target is not reached because there is no shell. Similarly, when *Pranava* is uttered with its meaning in mind, it will lead to the goal. Ceaseless thought of the Lord is the way to *Atmajnana.*

The following points are revealed through these two verses.

1. Repetition of a '*mantra*' (Japa) is not enough. There should be concentration on the thought of the formula.

2. Among all the *mantras*, *pranava* is the highest. It leads to *Brahman.*

3. It is not enough to think of the Lord now and then. Continuous memory is essential.

4. All the senses should be restrained, not merely one are two.

5. The heart is the source of the mind. The mind rises from the heart (Atma) and sinks into the heart.

6. Any one without distinction of race, caste or creed can attain *Moksha* by the above-mentioned method of repeating *Pranava.*

Question : *What is the highest state ?*

Answer : *Paramatma* – the state of *Brahman.*

Question : *Who can attain it ?*

Answer : He who can restrain the senses, fix the mind in *Atma* hold *Prana* in the *Brahmarandhra* by *yogadharana*, repeat *Pranava* understanding its singnificance, attains *Brahman.*

The Lord is easily attainable by one who thinks of Him with single-minded devotion continuously.

14. अनन्यचेताः सततं यो मां स्मरति नित्यशः ।
तस्याहं सुलभः पार्थ नित्ययुक्तस्य योगिनः ॥ १४

Ananyachetah satatam yo mam smarati nityasah ।
tasya'ham sulabhah partha nityayuktasya yoginah ॥ 14

Meaning : पार्थ *Partha :* O Arjuna ! यः *yah :* who, अनन्यचेताः *ananyachetah :* with single-minded devotion, माम् *mam :* Me, नित्यशः *nityasah :* ever, सततम् *satatam :* always, स्मरति *smarati :* remember, नित्ययुक्तस्य *nityayuktasya :* ever united with Me, तस्य *tasya :* of him, अहम् *aham :* I, सुलभः *sulabhah :* am easily attained.

Substance : O Arjuna ! Who thinks of Me with single-minded devotion, continuously and ever, by him who is ever united with Me, I am easily attained.

Commentary : The easy way to attain God is here explained. People think that it is very difficult to attain Him. But practising in the right way, He is easily attained. He who thinks of Him continuously and always attains Him.

The mind should be free from any other thought except the thought of God. Usually the mind is attached to various things and gets entangled in the meshes of the objective world through the senses. That is why it is said here that one should be filled to the brim with the thought of God continuously and for ever. It is not enough to think of Him now and then. Always and every day the thought of God should be present in the mind. Of course by steady practice day after day, the mind could be trained to think of God more and more. So practising, after a long time, the mind gets fixed and does not turn away from Him. Then the Lord is attained.

The seeker should be vigilent and try his best not to yield to the temptations of *Maya.* The wakeful and watchful man has no fear of falling away from the goal.

Question : *Who can attain God easily ?*

Answer : Those who worship God with single-minded devotion day after day and for ever attain Him.

Question : *What is the easy path to realise God ?*

Answer : (1) Single-minded devotion and (2) Constant contemplation of the Divine.

Those who attain God do not again enter Samsara.

15. मामुपेत्य पुनर्जन्म दुःखालयमशाश्वतम् ।
नाप्नुवन्ति महात्मानः संसिद्धिं परमां गताः ॥ १५

Mam upetya punar janma duhkhalayam asasvatam ।
napnuvanti mahatmanah samsiddhim paramam gatah ॥ 15

Meaning : परमां *paramam :* highest, संसिद्धिम् *samsiddhim:* perfection, गताः *gatah :* having reached, महात्मानः *mahatmanah :* great souls, माम् *mam :* Me, उपेत्य *upetya :* having attained, पुनः *punah :* again, दुःखालयम् *duhkhalayam :* abode of sorrow, अशाश्वतम् *asasvatam :* impermanent, जन्म *janma :* birth, नाप्नुवन्ति *na apnuvanti :* do not get.

Substance : Having attained Me these great souls (*Mahatmas*) do not again take birth, which is the place of pain and is non-eternal. They have reached the highest perfection.

Commentary : It is declared here that those who attained God do not enter *samsara*. So long as realisation does not come to man he is whirled about in the flood of birth and death. When truth is known there is no birth, and hence no pain or sorrow. The need for perfect freedom is stated here. Freedom is to be attained for the purpose transcending pain and sorrow.

The Lord makes it clear that the place where man takes birth is the abode of sorrow and is non-eternal. Birth is subject to those two evils. Even if a person feels that he is

enjoying something here it is only a shadowy joy, which is mixed with pain. We see that joy is inevitably followed by sorrow as its own shadow. That is why the wise men are not tempted by these reflected pleasures. The world is the abode of sorrow. It is the place where sorrow rules. Out of ignorance and delusion, man imagines that he is enjoying this or that pleasure. But the Lord who knows the truth warns mankind out of infinite compassion–"O ye mortals, do not be deluded, this world is the very abode of pain and sorrow. Seek for that which is true joy and eternal and transcend all sorrow.

'*Avidya*' is the power which deludes man to think of non–eternal as eternal, the impure as pure, and *anatma* as *Atma*.

So the way to transcend is to attain God. Let everyone take refuge in God in every way, through devotion, knowledge and dispassion.

Union with God is the highest state of freedom and perfection. As many enlightened sages have attained that state, it is suggested that every man can achieve it with adequate will and discrimination. Those who take refuge in God with a pure heart are *mahatmas*. Those who are entangled in worldly objects are '*alpatmas*,'–little minded men. *Mahatma* is a title. To reject the false and hold on to Truth, to reject the ephemeral and hold on to the Eternal, to reject *anatma* and hold on to *Atma*, is the way to attain the highest state of *Mahatma*. Such enlightened sages do not return to the world which is characterised by pain and sorrow. Those who are desirous of eternal joy should strive with faith and devotion to reach that state.

Question : *What is the nature of this world ?*

Answer : It is full of sorrow and non–eternal.

Question : *Who do not enter the world ?*

Answer : Those who have attained God.

Question : *What is that God-state ?*

Answer : It is the state of highest perfection.

Question : *What is the way to transcend sorrow ?*

Answer : Not to enter the world (take birth) is the way to transend sorrow.

Question : *What is the way to become birthless ?*

Answer : Attaining the highest perfection–*Paramatma.*

All the worlds upto Brahmaloka are not ultimate; they come and go.

16. आब्रह्मभुवनाल्लोकाः पुनरावर्तिनोऽर्जुन ।
मामुपेत्य तु कौन्तेय पुनर्जन्म न विद्यते ॥ १६

Abrahmabhuvanallokah punaravartino'rjuna ।
mam upetyatu kaunteya punarjanma na vidyate ॥ 16

Meaning : अर्जुन *Arjuna :* O Arjuna ! आब्रह्मभुवनात् लोकाः *abrahmabhuvanat lokah :* up to Brahmaloka worlds, पुनरावर्तिनः *punaravarthinah :* subject to return, कौन्तेय *kaunteya :* O Arjuna ! माम् *mam :* Me, उपेत्यतु *upetyatu :* but having attained, पुनर्जन्म *punarjanma :* re-birth, न विद्यते *na vidyate :* is not.

Substance : O Arjuna! All worlds upto *Brahmaloka* are subject to return; having attained me there is no re-birth.

Commentary : In the universe there are several places of existence-gross, subtle, yet more subtle etc. All these do not touch the ultimate. They are all in the realm of the phenomenal-the difference being in their gross or less gross nature. So those who reach the subtler worlds like *Svargaloka* or *Brahmaloka* have to return again. They come and go in the same way as this world. But those who have attained *Paramatma* have no re-birth. This is *Moksha.* The reason is that all the worlds up to *Brahmaloka* are objective and so they repeat themselves endlessly. Only *Atma* which is the

'*Drik*' is not subject to the modifications of time and place. It is imperishable. Having attained it there is no *karma,* and so there is no birth *Janma.*

Question : *What is the way to transcend birth ?*

Answer : Attaining *Paramatma* is the way.

Question : *What is the nature of the worlds upto Brahmaloka ?*

Answer : They return again and again.

The time-scheme of Brahma (the Creator) and the non-eternal nature of Brahmaloka are explained.

17. सहस्रयुगपर्यन्तमहर्यद्ब्रह्मणो विदुः ।
रात्रिं युगसहस्रान्तां तेऽहोरात्रविदो जनाः ॥ १७

Sahasrayugaparyantam ahar yad brahmano viduh ।
ratrim yugasahasrantam te 'horatravido janah ॥ 17

Meaning : जनाः *Janah :* people, ब्रह्मणः *brahmanah :* of Brahma (Creator), यत् अहः *yat ahah :* which day, सहस्रयुगपर्यन्तम् *sahasrayugaparyantam :* ending in a thousand yugas (aeons), विदुः *viduh :* know, रात्रिं *ratrim :* night, युगसहस्रान्तां *yugasahasrantam :* ending in a thousand yugas (aeons), ते *te :* they, अहोरात्रविदः *ahoratravidah :* knowers of day and night.

Substance : Those people who know the length of the day of Brahma which ends in a thousand *yugas* and night which also ends in a thousand *yugas,* know day and night.

Commentary : In the previous verse it was stated that all the worlds upto *Brahmaloka* are non-eternal, subject to change, and they come and go. Here the Lord gives an estimate of the duration of day and night of Brahma (Creator) and thereby suggests that even Brahma is limited by time. The day of Brahma is thousand *yugas* and night another thousand *yugas.* So one complete day and night for Brahma endures two thousand *Mahayugas.* The following table shows the duration in years :

Kaliyuga	: 432000 years	
Dvaparayuga	: 864000 years	(Twice Kaliyuga)
Tretayuga	: 1296000 years	(Thrice Kaliyuga)
Kritayuga or Satyayuga.	1728000 years	(Four times Kaliyuga).
Total :	4320000	(1 Mahayuga.)

One thousand such *Mahayugas* make a day, and another one thousand such *Mahayugas* make a night for Brahma. Three hundred and sixty five such days make a year, and one hundred such years constitute the life-time of Brahma. What one should understand is that even this astronomical duration of life of Brahma is limited by time. The sage is not interested in anything circumscribed by time, and the transitory pleasures derived by living in such worlds. He aspires to go beyond time, to realise the immeasurable *Paramatma.* Whereas every thing is conditioned by time, the Lord alone is eternal. In Him all time, space, and all the worlds are created by the power of His *Mayasakti.* The wise man takes no thought of the unreal, but aspires for the Eternal. He knows what time is, and how time destroys all things, and how he can transcend time by taking refuge in *Paramatma.*

Question : *What is the time-scheme of Brahma (Creator) ?*

Answer : One thousand Mahayugas constitute a day and another one thousand Mahayugas a night for Brahma.

Question : *What is the conclusion drawn from this ?*

Answer : Brahma (Creator) is also limited by time. *Paramatma* is alone beyond time. So the idea is that the wise man should seek for the Eternal.

The origin and dissolution of the worlds are explained.

18. अव्यक्ताद्व्यक्तयः सर्वाः प्रभवन्त्यहरागमे ।
रात्र्यागमे प्रलीयन्ते तत्रैवाव्यक्तसंज्ञके ॥ १८

Avyaktadvyaktayah sarvah prabhavantyaharagame ।
ratryagame praliyante tatrai'va 'vyaktasamjnake ॥ 18

Meaning : अहरागमे *aharagame* : at the coming of day, अव्यक्तात् *avyaktat* : from the unmanifested, सर्वाः *sarvah* : all, व्यक्तयः *vyaktayah* : the manifested, प्रभवन्ति *prabhavanti* : proceed, रात्र्यागमे *ratryagame* : at the coming of night, अव्यक्तसंज्ञके *avyaktasamjnake* : termed unmanifested, तत्रैव *tatra eva* : in that only, प्रलीयन्ते *praliyante* : dissolve.

Substance : At the coming of day all the manifested proceed from the unmanifested and the coming of night everything dissolves in that only which is termed as the unmanifested.

Commentary : Except the Supreme, all else is subject to birth and death. All the manifested proceed from and dissolve in *Maya* (*Prakriti*) which power is in the Lord Himself. From the darkness of sleep stream forth the wonderful dream-world and all that dissolves in the darkness of sleep. The awakened man has nothing to do with the dream-world. So also *Paramatma* has no contact with the manifested which proceeds from and dissolves in the unmanifested (*avyakta*). But He remains as the supporter of all.

Question : *From what does the manifested proceed ?*

Answer : From the unmanifest.

Question : *When do they come out ?*

Answer : At the coming of day of Brahma (Creator).

Question : *When do they dissolve and where ?*

Answer : At the coming of night, and into the Avyakta they dissolve.

All things stream forth again and again, and dissolve again and again.

19. भूतग्रामः स एवायं भूत्वा भूत्वा प्रलीयते ।
रात्र्यागमेऽवशः पार्थ प्रभवत्यहरागमे ॥ १९

Bhutagramah sa eva'yam bhutva-bhutva praliyate ।
ratryagame'vasah partha prabhavatyaharagame ॥

Meaning: पार्थ *Partha :* O Arjuna! स एवायं भूतग्रामः *sa eva 'yam bhutagramah :* that multitude of beings, अवशः *avasah :* helpless, भूत्वा भूत्वा *bhutva bhutva :* being born again and again, रात्र्यागमे *ratryagame :* at the coming of night, प्रलीयते *praliyate :* dissolves, अहरागमे *aharagame :* at the coming of day, प्रभवति *prabhavati :* comes forth.

Substance: O Arjuna! That multitude of beings coming forth again and again is dissolved at the coming of night; it streams forth again at the coming of day.

Commentary: The multitude of beings comes forth again and again at the beginning of every *Kalpa*, and is dissolved again and again at the end of every *Kalpa*. Thus birth and death go on repeatedly. Till knowledge dawns the cycle continues endlessly for the multitude of beings. As man is conditioned by his *Karma*, he is helpless to stop the wheel. As he is bound by his own desires, he is not free. Therefore man should strive for freedom. He has already passed through millions of births. By some good fortune, he has acquired a human birth. Without wasting it in useless pursuits, he should strive for liberation.

Question: *What is the fate of all Jivas till Karma is worked out?*

Answer : They take birth and they die repeatedly.

Question: *By what is the bondage of Karma broken?*

Answer : By knowledge of *Atma*.

Paramatma is higher than the unmanifested.

20. परस्तस्मात्तु भावोऽन्योऽव्यक्तोऽव्यक्तात्सनातनः ।
यः स सर्वेषु भूतेषु नश्यत्सु न विनश्यति ॥ २०

Parastasmattu bhavo 'nyo 'vyakto 'vyaktat sanatanah ।
yah sa sarveshu bhuteshu nasya su na vinasyati । 20

Meaning: यः भावः *yah bhavah :* which existence, तस्मात् अव्यक्तात् तु *tasmat avyaktat tu :* than that the unmani–

fested (the night of Brahma) but, अन्यः *anyah :* another, परः *parah :* higher, अव्यक्तः *avyaktah :* unmanifested, सनातनः *sanatanah :* eternal, सः *sah :* that, सर्वेषु भूतेषु *sarveshu bhuteshu :* all beings, नश्यत्सु *nasyatsu :* dying, न विनश्यति *na vinasyati :* not destroyed.

Substance: But verily there exists, higher than that unmanifested, another unmanifested, the Eternal, which is not destroyed when all beings are destroyed.

Commentary: In the previous verse, the nature of the unmanifested (*Prakriti*) was explained. Here it is declared that there exists another unmanifested, the Eternal, (*Paramatma*) which is not destroyed when all beings are destroyed. The distinction between *Paramatma* and all other beings born of *Prakriti* is explained below.

Beings.	*Paramatma.*
1) Subject to Maya.	1) Lord of Maya.
2) Of little separate forms.	2) Cosmic Intelligence, all pervading and all sustaining.
3) Drisya – Visible to the senses.	3) Drik – the Witness.
4) Having a beginning.	4) No beginning and no end.
5) Subject to death.	5) Imperishable.

From this we understand why we should worship the Lord. All that is non-eternal can only hold on to the eternal as its last refuge and support. So leaving of all non-external things of pleasure and profit in this transitory and sorrowful world, man should meditate on the ever glorious and imperishable Self. By such meditation, the death-striken *Jiva* acquires immortality by union with That which does not perish.

Question: *What is the nature of Paramatma?*

Answer : (1) He is distinct from the unmanifested *Prakriti.*
(2) He is Supreme. (3) He is Eternal. (4) He transcends the senses. (5) He exists when all beings perish.

Those who are united with Paramatma have no re-birth.

21. अव्यक्तोऽक्षर इत्युक्तस्तमाहुः परमां गतिम् ।
यं प्राप्य न निवर्तन्ते तद्धाम परमं मम ॥ २१

Avyakto'kshara ityuktastamahuh paramam gatim ।
yam prapya na nivartante taddhama paramam mama ॥ 21

Meaning : अव्यक्तः *avyaktah* : unamanifested, अक्षरः इति *aksharah iti* : imperishable thus, उक्तः *uktah* : is called, तम् *tam* : that, परमाम् *paramam* : highest, गतिम् *gatim* : goal, आहुः *ahuh* : (they) say, यम् *yam* : which, प्राप्य *prapya* : having reached, न निवर्तन्ते *na nivartante* : not return, तत् *tat*: that, मम *mama* : My, परमम् *paramam* : the highest, धाम *dhama* : abode (state).

Substance : What is called the unmanifested and the imperishable, that they say, is the highest goal; they who reach it return not; that is my highest abode.

Commentary : All the *Vedas* and *Sastras* declare that *Paramatma*, the Imperishable, is the highest state. Reaching it man does not return to the perishable body. There is no *samsara* again for the sage who attains the highest goal. Having lived in the world, it becomes clear that every thing is vanishing like a dream. The child of today is the old man of tomorrow. Pleasures turn into pains. Joys lead to sorrow. Life ends in death. The whole scheme of existence is only a troubled dream. Time passes and death takes away all. Knowing this fully from experience the wise man is not at all interested in this child's play. He has no relish for these insipid things. He knows that

the dream life is utterly unbecoming of him, who has the eternal Self as his real Being. So he aims high, aims at Truth, aims at the lion rather than catch a jackal. So the Lord's inspiring call to mankind is to give up the foolish little self, and ascend to Him, and be one with Him.

Reaching Him, there is no re-birth. Why should man wish to be born in the cage of flesh? Is it to taste the ditch-water of several worldly pleasures again? Why does he crave for such wretched things when he is really the immortal bliss and blessedness. The man of Self-realisation rejects the body as a dirty tattered robe. He does not wish to wear it again. Immortality, bliss and blessedness, he enjoys when he attains the highest abode of the Lord.

Question: *What is the highest state?*

Answer : The unmanifested, imperishable state of *Paramatma.*

Question : *What happens when man attains it?*

Answer : He attains immortality and is not reborn again.

Question : *What is the nature of Paramatma?*

Answer : He is imperishable, beyond the senses and the mind.

The way to attain Paramatma is explained.

22. पुरुषः स परः पार्थ भक्त्या लभ्यस्त्वनन्यया ।
यस्यान्तःस्थानि भूतानि येन सर्वमिदं ततम् ॥ २२

Purushah sa parah partha bhaktya labhyastvananyaya ।
yasya'ntahsthani bhutani yena sarvam idam tatam । 22

Meaning : पार्थ *partha* : O Arjuna! भूतानि *bhutani* : beings, यस्य *yasya* : of whom, अन्तःस्थानि *antasthani* : dwelling within, येन *yena* : by which, सर्वमिदम् *sarvamidam* : all this, ततम् *tatam* : pervaded, सः परः पुरुषः *sah parah purushah* : that highest Purusha, अनन्यया *ananyaya* : unswerving, without any other object, भक्त्यातु *bhaktyatu* : verily with devotion, लभ्यः *labdhah* : attainable.

Substance : O Arjuna ! That highest Purusha is attainable by unswerving devotion to Him alone, within whom all beings dwell, and by whom all this is pervaded.

Commentary : That which is to be attained and the way to attain it are both explained here. Where does the world with all the crores of beings reside ? What sustains it ? These questions are answered here. On *Paramatma*–as the snake is super-imposed on the rope—the whole universe with all the worlds in it is created as a wonderful illusion. As the rope is the basis, *Paramatma* is the basis, the foundation, the Reality behind all this illusion. Where is the dream world ? It is in man and no where else. So also, all this world is in *Paramatma*. Like the cream in milk, *Paramatma* pervades the whole of creation.

Unswerving devotion to the Lord is the only way to attain Him. Intense devotion and one-pointed concentration are essential for Realisation. Dispassion, *vairagya*, towards the whole of the objective universe, and faith in the Lord as the only refuge–this is intense (*ananya*) *bhakti*. The perfect does not think of anything else. He attaches no value to the enjoyments, pains, and sufferings of life. He finds that there is only one Reality and in that he takes refuge. Such *bhakti* leads to the Lord.

It is to be noted that the Lord emphasises devotion (*bhakti*) in every Discourse, whatever may be the *yoga* taught in it. This shows that devotion is the common ingredient in every type of *yoga*. All *yogas* have for their life–element devotion to the Lord.

The Lord is *Parama Purusha*. The *Jiva* attains that state by devotion, knowledge, and dispassion. That is the aim of human life.

Question : *On whom is the world based and by whom is it pervaded ?*

Answer : *Paramatma.*

Question : *How can he be attained ?*

Answer : By single-minded devotion.

In four verses the Lord explains the path leading to liberation and the path leading to re–birth.

23. यत्र काले त्वनावृत्तिमावृत्तिं चैव योगिनः ।
प्रयाता यान्ति तं कालं वक्ष्यामि भरतर्षभ ॥ २३

Yatra kale tvanavrittim avrittim chai'va yoginah ।
prayata yanti tam kalam vakshyami bharatarshabha ॥ 23

Meaning : भरतर्षभ *bharatarshabha :* O best of the Bharatas ! यत्र काले *yatra kale :* in what time, प्रयाताः *prayatah :* departing, योगिनः *yoginah :* yogis, अनावृत्तिम् तु *anavrittim tu :* verily no return, आवृत्तिम् च एव *avrithim cha eva :* and also return, यान्ति *yanti :* go to, तम् कालम् *tam kalam :* that time, वक्ष्यामि *vakshyami :* I will tell.

Substance : Now O Arjuna – the best of Bharatas! departing at what time *yogis* never return, and departing at what time *yogis* return, those times I will tell you.

The Lord explains the non–return path of light leading to liberation.

24. अग्निर्ज्योतिरहः शुक्लः षण्मासा उत्तरायणम् ।
तत्र प्रयाता गच्छन्ति ब्रह्म ब्रह्मविदो जनाः ॥ २४

Agnir jyotir ahah suklah shanmasa uttarayanam ।
tatra prayata gacchanti brahma brahmavido janah ॥ 24

Meaning : अग्निः *agnih :* fire, ज्योतिः *jyotih :* light, अहः *ahah :* day, शुक्लः *suklah :* the bright fortnight, षण्मासाः *shanmasah :* six months, उत्तरायणम् *uttarayanam :* the northern path of the sun, तत्र *tatra :* there, प्रयाताः *prayatah :* departing, ब्रह्मविदः *brahmavidah :* the knowers of Brahman, जनाः *janah :* people, ब्रह्म *brahma :* to Brahman, गच्छन्ति *gacchanti :* go.

Substance : Fire, light, day, the bright fortnight, the six months of the northern solistice–following this path, the knowers of *Brahman* go to *Brahman.*

Commentary: Knowledge *(Jnana)* is light; ignorance *(Ajnana)* is darkness. He who possesses the effulgence of *Brahmajnana* goes to *Brahman.*

The bright state comes only to the knowers of *Brahman* and not to others. The word *'Janah'* shows that the realisation of *Brahman* is open to all without any distinction of caste, sex, religion or race.

Since *Brahmajnana* is light, five light-causing things are mentioned here. (1) Fire, (2) Light, (3) Day, (4) The bright fortnight, (5) The northern solistice *(Uttarayana).* The fifth points the way to the higher worlds of light and knowledge. The *Jiva* should find his abode in the light of *Brahmajnana,* the imperishable Self. So he moves upwards into light and not downwards into darkness. The upward look *(urdhvadrishti)* is absorption in the light of *Atma,* and the downward look *(adhodrishti)* is in the contemplation of the insentient material-world. Thus the light-producing things are indication of knowledge and the ascent of man towards Self-realisation. From this state there is no return.

Question: *What is the path taken by the knowers of Brahman?*

Answer: Fire, light, day, the bright fortnight, the northern-solistice, – this is the path taken by the knowers of *Brahman*?

Question: *Who attains Brahman?*

Answer: The knowers of *Brahman* attain *Brahman.*

The path leading to rebirth is explainad.

25. धूमो रात्रिस्तथा कृष्णः षण्मासा दक्षिणायनम् ।
तत्र चान्द्रमसं ज्योतिर्योगी प्राप्य निवर्तते ॥ २५

Dhumo ratristatha krishnah shanmasa dakshinayanam ।
tatra chandramasam jyotir yogi prapya nivartate ॥ 25

Meaning: धूमः *dhumah*: smoke, रात्रिः *ratrih*: night, तथा *tatha*: also, कृष्णः *Krishnah*: the dark fortnight, षण्मासाः

shanmasah: six months, दक्षिणायनम् *dakshinayanam*: the southern path of the sun, तत्र *tatra*: there, योगी *yogi*: the yogi, चान्द्रमसम् *chandramasam*: lunar, ज्योतिः *jyothih*: light, प्राप्य *prapya*: having attained, निवर्तते *nivartate*: returns.

Substance: Smoke, night, the dark fortnight, also the six months of the southern solistice, – attaining by these to the lunar light, the *yogi* returns.

Commentary: As knowledge is light, so ignorance *(avidya)* is darkness. He who takes the later path is reborn again and again. Here the *yogi* is one who has performed actions with a desire to enjoy the fruits. As he has not understood the secret of *Brahmajnana,* he is subject to birth after birth. Here, smoke, night, the dark fortnight, stand for the enveloping darkness of ignorance. The *Dakshinayana* shows the downward path. The *yogi* who is devoid of *Brahmajnana,* reaching the lunar sphere, return to the world again according to the nature of his *Karma.* The path af avidya is indicated by the southern solistice.

It is also necessary to understand the significance of *Uttarayana* and *Dakshinayana.* We find that many great souls have passed away in *Dakshinayana* and many deluded souls have passed away in *Uttarayana.* If the external meaning alone is taken, it would lead to the absurd conclusion that the ignorant attain the Light and the wise fall into darkness. The wise always take the upward path of light, whatever may be the time when the body falls. The deluded take the path of darkness, whatever may be the time when the body falls. The upward path signifies *Jnana,* and the downward path *Ajnana.*

Question: *What is the path taken by the man of desires?*

Answer: He takes the path of darkness, indicated by smoke, night etc.

Question: *Does he take birth again?*

Answer: Yes.

Question : *What is the implication ?*

Answer : Only by *Atmajnana*, man takes the upward path, and attains *Brahman*, the birthless and deathless state.

The former idea is further explained.

26. शुक्लकृष्णे गती ह्येते जगतः शाश्वते मते ।
एकया यात्यनावृत्तिमन्ययावर्तते पुनः ॥ २६

Suklakrishne gati hyete jagatah sasvate mate ।
ekaya yatyanavrittim anyaya'vartate punah ॥ 26

Meaning : शुक्लकृष्णे *suklakrishne :* bright and dark, ह्येते गतीः *hyete gathi :* veriy these two paths, जगतः *jagatah :* of the world, शाश्वते मते *sasvate mate :* eternal are thought, एकया *ekaya :* by one, अनावृत्तिम् *anavrittim :* to non-return, याति *yati :* (he) goes, अन्यया *anyaya :* by the other, पुनः *punah :* again, आवर्तते *avartate :* he returns.

Substance : The path of light and darkness are both thought to be eternal. By the one man does not return, by the other he returns again.

Commentary : It is declared here that these two paths of light and darkness, of liberation and bondage, of knowledge and ignorance, are eternal and fixed for all mankind. Those who acquire *Atmajnana* do not ruturn again into the cage of flesh and blood. The others return again and again into the body, till they attain perfection. The two paths are open to man. Which to choose depends on the discrimination of man. If a man ascends into light, he is blessed; if a man descends into darkness, he suffers all the ills of human life. Let all the seekers resolutely set their face against ignorance, and look upward for the Light of *Atma.*

Question: *What are the two paths open to the world ?*

Answer : The path of light and knowledge (*Uttarayana*) and the path of darkness and ignorance (*Dakshinayana*).

Question : *What should the wise man do ?*

Answer : He should eliminate ignorance and follow the path of light.

The Lord commends the yogis who understand these two paths and exhorts Arjuna to be a Yogi.

27. नैते सृती पार्थ जानन् योगी मुह्यति कश्चन ।
तस्मात्सर्वेषु कालेषु योगयुक्तो भवार्जुन ॥ २७

Nai'te sriti partha janan yogi muhyati kaschana ।
tasmat sarveshu kaleshu yogayukto bhava'rjuna ॥ 27

Meaning : पार्थ *partha:* O Arjuna ! एते सृती *ete sriti :* these two paths, जानन् *janan :* knowing, योगी कश्चन *yogi kaschana :* any yogi, न मुह्यति *na muhyati :* is not deluded, तस्मात् *tasmat :* therefore, अर्जुन *Arjuna :* Arjuna ! सर्वेषु कालेषु *sarveshu kaleshu :* at all times, योगयुक्तः भव *yogayuktah bhave :* steadfast in Yoga be (you).

Substance : O Arjuna ! Knowing these two paths, no *Yogi* is deluded; therefore at all times, be steadfast in *yoga.*

Commentary : It is stated here that the *yogi* who understands the two paths of light and darkness is not deluded. It means that he would never go into darkness and delusion, but always rest in the light of knowledge and truth. Having seen what is poison and what is nectar, the wise man rejects the poison and takes the nectar. So also, knowing clearly – this is *Atma*, that is *Anatma*, this is light and that is darkness, this is immortality and that is death – who will go into darkness and death ? No. He would never allow delusion to come near him. He has understood the secret of life and death, by his discriminatory reason. Therefore the Lord says :— "O Arjuna ! Be established in *yoga*; have your being always in the light of *Brahman.*" The Lord's command is to hold the knowledge firm at all times because negligence even for a second would give way for *Maya* to work evil in the heart of man.

The moment when the Lord is forgotten, that very moment causes danger, delusion, harm, and wrong action. The absence of light is darkness. Forgetfulness of Truth is itself the empire of *Maya*. The moment when man begins to enquire after truth, *Maya* disappears. When such enquiry lapses even for a moment, *Maya* enters, declaring 'I am here'. When people pursue the thief determined to catch him, he runs away and disappears. Such is *Maya*. It is always in and around the people but when they pursue the enquiry after Truth, it disappears. So the enquiry should be kept up continuously. Man then lives in the light of Truth.

Yogayukto bhava: *Yoga* means union with *Paramatma*, through knowledge, devotion, or *dhyana* or by any and every means pointed out in the *Sastras*. To be established in such *yoga* is what is taught here.

Question : *Who is not deluded ?*

Answer : He who knows light and darkness, knowledge and ignorance, does not fall into error and delusion.

Question : *What is the duty of the aspirant ?*

Answer He should always be established in *yoga*.

Question : *Is it not enough to be in yoga for a short time ?*

Answer : No. To forget light, to forget Truth, is to fall into darkness and untruth. So one should always be established in *yoga*.

The supreme state of the yogi, and the excellence of yoga are stated.

28. वेदेषु यज्ञेषु तपःसु चैव दानेषु यत्पुण्यफलं प्रदिष्टम् ।
अत्येति तत्सर्वमिदं विदित्वा योगी परं स्थानमुपैति चाद्यम् ॥ २८

Vedeshu yajneshu tapahsu chai'va
daneshu yat punyaphalam pradistam ।
atyeti tat sarvam idam viditva
yogi param sthanam upaiti cha'dyam । 28

Meaning : योगी *yogi* : the yogi (meditator on Atma), इदम् विदित्वा *idam viditva* : having known this, वेदेषु *vedeshu* : in the Vedas, यज्ञेषु *yajneshu* : in sacrifices, दानेषु *daneshu* : in gifts, तपःसु च *tapasu cha* : and in austerities, यत् *yat* : what, पुण्यफलम् *punyaphalam* : fruit of merit, प्रदिष्टम् *pradishtam*: is declared, तत् सर्वम् *tat sarvam* : all that, अत्येति *astyeti* : goes beyond, आद्यम् च *adyam cha* : and primeval, परम् स्थानम् *param sthanam* : supreme abode, उपैति *upaiti* : attains.

Substance : Whatever fruit or merit is declared (in the scripture) to arise from the study of the *Vedas*, the performance of sacrifices, the practice of austerities, and the offering of gifts, beyond all these goes the *yogi* who knows the Imperishable *Brahman*, and attains the supreme primeval state.

Commentary : The excellence of *Brahma jnana* is declared here. The knower of the Imperishable *Brahman* attains the highest state, far beyond any of the meritorious rewards springing from the study of the *Vedas*, the performance of sacrifices and austerities, and the offering of gifts. *Brahman* is the only Truth, and having reached it, man attains the Supreme state.

It is true that several meritorious rewards come to man through the performance of sacrifices etc. But they are all in the realm of *Maya*; they have an end; they are not eternal. Therefore the *yogi* aspires to attain that state in which all the rewards of all the good works are comprehended and fulfilled. And that state is the realisation of *Brahman*, the only Reality.

Brahmajnana transcends all the merits derived from the study of the *Vedas*, or sacrifices or other good works. Fifty is included in the hundred. So the person who attains the hundred includes the fifty and transcends it also. *Brahmajnana* is '*mahapunya*'. The lesser fruits of other meritorious deeds are included in it. Whereas all other rewards end in time, the *yogi* of *brahmajnana* lives in eternal bliss.

There are many illiterate people who cannot study the *Vedas*. There are many people who are physically weak and so cannot perform austerities. There are poor people who cannot offer meritorious gifts. What shall be the fate of all these people? Is there no way of liberation for them? The Lord here declares that by the contemplation and understanding of *Brahman*, they shall attain the highest state, and obtain all the rewards of all the meritotrious acts done by others. Purity of mind and heart, purity in devotion are the only things needed. The study of the *Vedas*, *tapas*, and *dhyana*, if they are performed without attachment, purify the heart of man and enable him to attain *Brahmajnana*.

Brahmajnana is the highest state. The seekers in the beginning may undertake all the good works enjoined in the *Sastras*. But let them not stop there, for, the goal is Self-realisation, and no one should stop at any intermediate stage. With *Brahmajnana* the quest for the Supreme stops, and man is eternally satisfied.

Question : ***What is his merit who understands the imperishable Brahman?***

Answer : He attains all the rewards of (1) Vedic study, (2) Sacrifices, (3) Austerities, and (4) *Dana* and transcends all these.

Question : *What is the nature of Brahman?*

Answer : It is the primeval cause of all and the highest state (*Param sthanam*).

Question : *What is the highest state?*

Answer : *Paramatma.*

Question : *What should a person do who aspires to attain the Highest?*

Answer : With a pure heart, he should take refuge in *Paramatma*. As by watering the roots of a tree, all the branches, fruits and flowers are watered, so also the man who attains *Brahman*, derives all the merits of all the good works done in the world.

इति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे
श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे अक्षरपरब्रह्मयोगो नाम
अष्टमोऽध्यायः ॥

Iti Srimad Bhagavadgitasupanishatsu brahmavidyayam yogasastre Sri Krishnarjuna samvade Aksharaparabrahma Yogo nama ashtamo'dhyayah.

Thus, in the Upanishads of the glorious Bhagavad Gita, the Science of the Eternal, the Scripture of Yoga, and the dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna ends The Discourse entitled - Aksharaparabrahma Yoga

(The *Yoga* of Imperishable *Brahman*)

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श्री भगवद्गीता

SRI BHAGAVAD GITA

अथ नवमोऽध्यायः

Atha Navamodhyayah

NINTH DISCOURSE

राजविद्याराजगुह्ययोगः

RAJAVIDYA RAJAGUHYA YOGA

THE YOGA OF ROYAL KNOWLEDGE AND ROYAL SECRET.

I. The title of the Discourse :

"*Rajavidya Rajaguhya Yoga.*" The word '*raja*' (King) indicates supremacy. So '*rajavidya*' means royal knowledge. '*Rajaguhya*' means 'royal secret.' It means supreme knowledge and the supreme secret. It may be taken to mean also knowledge which Kings in former ages possessed and practised. '*Atmajnana*' which is declared in this Discourse is the highest knowledge, and the greatest secret. So the Discourse is entitled '*Rajavidya Rajaguhya Yoga*'.

II. Main Points of the Discourse :

1. The excellence of *Atmavidya*. (1–3 Verses)
2. The form of the Lord. (4–6 Verses)
3. The Origin of the Universe. (7–10 Verses)
4. Qualities of man of Divine and demonical nature. (11–15 Verses)

5. The Universal form of the Lord. (16–19 Verses)
6. The rewards of *Nishkama Karma* and *Sakama Karma.* (20–25 Verses)
7. The supreme power of devotion and self-surrender to the Lord through *Nishkama Karma.* (26–34 Verses)

III. How the Discourse is connected with the previous one :

This is a continuation of what the Lord stated in the eigth Discourse in answer to the seven questions put by Arjuna regarding *sadhibuta, sadhidaiva* etc. The Lord declared that the Imprerishable *Brahman* (*Akshara Parabrahma Yoga*) includes the supreme (*nirguna*) and the manifestation (*saguna*). This Discourse starts with '*Jnana* and *Vijnana*' and we find a fuller explanation of the knowledge and secret of the Divine in this Discourse.

श्री भगवानुवाच

1. इदं तु ते गुह्यतमं प्रवक्ष्याम्यनसूयवे ।
ज्ञानं विज्ञानसहितं यज्ज्ञात्वा मोक्ष्यसेऽशुभात् ॥ १

Sri Bhagavan uvacha

Idam tu te guhyatamam pravakshyamyanasuyave ।
Jnanam vijnanasahitam yajjnatva mokshyase'subhat ॥ 1

श्री भगवानुवाच — *Sri Bhagavan Uvacha :* The blessed Lord said.

Meaning : यत् *yat :* that which, ज्ञात्वा *jnatva :* having known, अशुभात् *asubhat :* from evil, मोक्ष्यसे *mokshyase :* you are freed, तत् *tat :* that गुह्यतमम् *guhyatamam :* most secret, विज्ञानसहितम् *vijnanasahitam :* combined with realisation, इदं ज्ञानम् तु *idam jnanam tu :* this knowledge indeed, अनसूयवे *anasuyave :* to one who is free from cavil, ते *te :* to you, प्रवक्ष्यामि *pravakshyami :* I will declare fully.

Substance : The Blessed Lord said : To you, free from malice and cavil, I shall declare this profoundest secret, knowledge with experience combined, which having known, you shall be freed from all evil.

Commentary : The Lord now teaches the highest knowledge (*Atmajnana*) and the profoundest secret (*rajaguhyam*) combined with direct practical experience. The word '*guhyatamam*' indicates that the knowledge is the highest secret, beyond which there is nothing else to be known. The teaching of *Brahmajnana* is usually done to those who are qualified to receive it, or even to hear of it. What is that quality which entitles a person to hear and understand *Brahmatatvam*? The Lord answers it here by stating that Arjuna is free from malice (*asuya*). He is pure in heart and has the four qualities mentioned in the *Sastras (sadhana chatushtaya)*. So the Lord reveals the supreme knowledge. Those who are eager to receive the knowledge from a *Guru* should first of all examine themselves and know fully well whether they are established in virtue and self-control. *Brahmajnana* will never reveal itself in the impure heart, whatever other things one may possess, power or position. These things do not qualify any one to understand the Truth. The pure soul knows the secret and attains *Brahman*.

He who does not indulge in misrepresentating good to be bad, who commends even low forms of goodness in others, who does not delight in thinking of the evil in others is *anasuya*. Of all the host of bad qualities, envy is the leader. Like a poisionous cancer, it permeats the whole mind, and pulls down the *sadhaka* from any merit which he might have acquired by austerity. Several aspirants have fallen on account of this evil. The Lord understands human nature so well that he fixes attention on that one evil which is the source of all other evils. He knows that the desciple is free from this evil, and so, he reveals the profoundest secret to him in perfect confidence. Every disciple should impress his *Guru* about the purity of the heart, and only then would the *Guru* teach the highest knowledge. The purer you are, the greater would be the confidence of the *Guru* in you. Such mutual understanding is necessary for transmitting *Atmajnana*.

Jnanam Vignanasahitam : The word *jnanam* stands for knowledge obtained by the study of the *Sastras*. This knowledge is indirect (*paroksha*). *Vijnana* means direct experience (*aparoskha*). When one hears of a country from a friend or read of it in a book, his knowledge of the country is indirect. (*Paroksha*) but when he visits the country and sees it for himself his knowledge is direct (*Aparoksha*). Such is the difference between *Jnana* and *Vijnana*.

What is the fruit of *Vijnana*? The Lord says he who knows the truth directly is freed from all evil. What is this evil? It is *samsara* the cycle of birth and death, with all the ills and sorrows of one's ignorant life. Whatever is *anatma* comes under the delusive power of *Maya*. It is transient, incomplete, insipid, and appears to exist without any reality in it. *Atma* alone is *subha* (without evil). It is deathless, birthless, ever blessed, and blissful. So every seeker should follow the teaching of the Lord and rise to the plane of *Atma*.

Question : *What is Brahmavidya ?*

Answer : It is the highest knowledge and the highest secret.

Question : *Who receives the knowledge ?*

Answer : The man who is free from evil.

Question : *What is the qualification for Brahma Vidya ?*

Answer : Purity in heart.

Question : *What is this samsara ?*

Answer : It is Asubha (evil).

Question : *How can man escape from samsara ?*

Answer : By possessing knowledge of *Atma* combined with experience.

2. राजविद्या राजगुह्यं पवित्रमिदमुत्तमम् ।
प्रत्यक्षावगमं धर्म्यं सुसुखं कर्तुमव्ययम् ॥ २

Rajavidya rajaguhyam pavitram idam uttamam |
pratyakshavagamam dharmyam susukham kartum avyayam |

Meaning: इदम् *idam*: this (Brahmajnana), राजविद्या *rajavidya*: royal knowledge, राजगुह्यम् *rajaguhyam*: royal secret, उत्तमम् *uttamam*: supreme, highest, पवित्रम् *pavitram*: purifier, प्रत्यक्षावगमम् *pratyakshavagamam*: to be realised directly by intution, धर्म्यम् *dharmyam*: righteous, कर्तुम् *kartum*: to perform, सुसुखम् *susukham*: very easy, अव्ययम् *avyayam*: imperishable.

Substance: This *Brahmajnana* is royal knowledge, royal secret, purifier, supreme, realisable by direct intutional knowledge, according to *Dharma*, very easy to perform and imperishable.

Commentary: All other sciences cannot bestow peace and bliss on mankind. Worldly knowledge can only deal with material things which are perishable. The profound mystery of life and death and immortality can be understood only when *Brahman* is realised. All other things are '*anatma*', '*jada*', insentient. They are impure. *Atma* the self, *Brahman* alone is pure and perfect. So this knowledge which reveals the ultimate Truth is declared to be royal knowledge and royal secret.

This royal knowledge is to be attained by direct intution. Its fruit is direct and immediate. All other works take time to bear fruit. But *Brahmajnana* bears fruit atonce and the sage of realisation becomes *Brahman*, is *Brahman* immediately.

It is declared here that the practice of *Brahmajnana* is very easy. When the mind is purified by self-effort of all its impurities like *raga* and *dvesha*, *tamas* and *rajas*, no further effort is needed for the realisation of *Brahman*, because *Brahman* is self-existent and self-luminous. There is no effort needed to realise the truth. So it is said in the *sastras* that *Brahmajnana* is easier than to crush the tender flower, or easier than ordinary respiration. This is not only very easy to practice but it is also the source of all *Dharma*, eternal, and imperishable.

Question: *What is the nature of Brahmajnana?*

Answer: It is royal knowledge, royal secret, pure, supreme, realisation by intution, righteous, very easy to practice, and imperishable.

Those who do not attain this knowledge return to the path of samsara.

3. अश्रद्दधानाः पुरुषा धर्मस्यास्य परंतप ।
अप्राप्य मां निवर्तन्ते मृत्युसंसारवर्त्मनि ॥ ३

Asraddadhanah purusha dharmasya'sya paramtapa ।
aprapya mam nivartante mrityu samsara vartmani ॥ 3

Meaning: परन्तप *parantapa*: O Arjuna! अस्य धर्मस्य: *asya dharmasya*: of this Dharma (Atmajnana), अश्रद्दधानाः *asraddhadhanah*: without faith, पुरुषाः *purushah*: people, माम् *mam*: Me, अप्राप्य *aprapya*: not attaining, मृत्युसंसारवर्त्मनि *mrityusamsaravartmani*: in the path of this world of death, निवर्तन्ते *nivartante*: return.

Substance: People without faith in this *Dharma* (self-knowledge) not attaining Me, return to the path of the world of death.

Commentary: Whether in worldly or spiritual life, faith and devotion to an ideal is the key to success. The degree of success depends on the intensity of one's faith. Man becomes that which he aims at, the time taken depending on the intensity of the effort, and the strength of the obstructing forces. Sooner or later, it is certain that man achieves what he yearns for with single-minded devotion.

The Lord declares here that without faith no one could attain Him, and without attaining Him no one can get immortality. Let the seekers understand that much diligence is needed even in small things and common affairs of life. This being so, one can understand what care and caution are needed to realise the highest state. So, the Lord emphasises the efficacy of faith throughout His teaching.

According to the Lord, this *Samsara* is a world of death. Death is stalking every where and yet blinded by the veil of *avidya*, man imagines that life is beautiful and pleasant. He has missed the true end of life. He has bartered away his birth

right of immortality and eternal bliss to a mess of pottage. The Lord knows this, and out of compassion he warns mankind not to come under the shadow of death and destruction. Without understanding the Truth, whatever other enjoyments man may try to have, all these are only the decoration of a corpse. The wise shall strive to know the Lord and transcend the ills of life and death.

The word *nivartante* may also be interpreted as *Nitaram Vartante* (i. e.) assuredly pass through the path of death.

Question : *Who can attain Paramatma ?*

Answer : Those who have faith in *Brahmajnana.*

Question : *What is the fate of those who have no faith ?*

Answer : Without attaining the Lord, they are caught in the whirlpool of *samsara.*

Question : *What is the nature of this samsara ?*

Answer : It is death.

The Lord explains how He pervaded the whole Universe.

4. मया ततमिदं सर्वं जगदव्यक्तमूर्तिना ।
मत्स्थानि सर्वभूतानि न चाहं तेष्ववस्थितः ॥ ४

Maya tatam idm sarvam jagad avyakta murtina ।
matsthani sarva bhutani na cha'ham teshvavasthitah । 4

Meaning : इदम् सर्वम् *idam sarvam :* all this, जगत् *jagat :* universe, अव्यक्तमूर्तिना *avyaktamurtina :* of form inconceivable by the senses, मया *maya :* by Me, ततम् *tatam :* is pervaded, सर्वभूतानि *sarva bhutani :* all beings, मत्स्थानि *mat sthani :* (are) in Me, तेषु *teshu :* in them, अहं *aham :* I, नच अवस्थितः *na cha avasthitah :* and am not placed.

Substance : By Me all this Universe is pervaded in the unmanifested form; all beings are in Me, and I am not placed in them.

Commentary : *Paramatma* is inconceivable by the senses and the mind. Even the elemental ether is not visible to the senses. How then can the *chidakasa*, the intelligence-consciousness (God) be an object of sense-perception ? Just as the material world is pervaded by the elemental ether, even so by that supreme intelligence (chit) all beings are pervaded. So the whole universe is in *Paramatma.*

The Lord is not placed in the world, because when closely examined, the world has no existence like the snake which is superimposed on the rope. How can *Paramatma*, the reality, exist in that unreality-the so called world as we see it ? So, it is said that all beings are in *Atma* (the Lord) and He is not in them.

As the Lord pervades all beings, material and mental the seeker should cognise His existence everywhere. He should not do evil deeds, should have love for all, and devotion to the Supreme.

Question : *What is the nature of Paramatma ?*

Answer : He is most subtle and inconceivable by the senses and the mind.

Question : *Where is Pramatma ?*

Answer : He pervades all beings and the whole universe.

Question : *Where do all beings exist ?*

Answer : In *Paramatma.*

5. न च मत्स्थानि भूतानि पश्य मे योगमैश्वरम् ।
भूतभृन्न च भूतस्थो ममात्मा भूतभावनः ॥ ५

Na cha matsthani bhutani pasya me yogamaisvaram ।
bhutabhrunna cha bhutastho mama'tma bhutabhavanah । 5

Meaning : भूतानि *bhutani :* beings, मत्स्थानि न च *matsthani na cha :* are not dwelling in Me, मे *me :* My, ऐश्वरम् *aisvaram :* Divine, योगम् *yogam :* yoga, पश्य *pasya :* behold,

मम *mama :* My, आत्मा *atma :* Self, भूतभृत् *bhutabhrit:* supporting the beings, भूतभावनाश्च *bhutabhavanah cha :* and bringing forth beings, न च भूतस्थः *na cha bhutasthah :* and not dwelling in the beings.

Substance : Nor are beings placed in Me; behold my Divine *yoga*. I am the support of all beings, their efficient cause, and yet I am not rooted in them.

Commentary : There appears to be an apparent contradiction. In the previous verse, it was declared that all beings are in the Lord. Here it is stated that the beings also are not in Him. The contradiction is only apparent and not real. From the point of view of the ignorant, the world has an existence, as it is touched and confirmed by the senses. So it is said to exist in, and sustained by *Paramatma*. From the Advaitic plane, the world does not exist at all, in the same manner as water does not exist in the mirage. So it is said here that the beings also do not exist in Him. This is from the pure Advaitic point of view, where there is only one undifferentiated eternal *Brahman*, and nothing else. The Lord's declaration means that *Drisya* the seen world does not exist in Him, nor He in *Drisya*. The man who has awakened from the dream comes to know that he never existed in the dream nor the dream in him. It is nothing. The man who saw the snake in the rope, when he comes to know the form of the rope, knows that snake did not and does not exist. Thus, there are no beings in the Lord, nor He in them. What existed, exists, and shall exist is *Paramatma* alone. This is the sovereign *yoga* of the Lord. The cosmic illusion appears to exist but really does not exist. So the world while appearing to exist, does not exist. All this is *Brahman* and nothing else. This is the royal secret.

Question : *What is the sovereign yoga of the Lord ?*

Answer : While *Paramatma* seems to create and sustain all beings, really they do not exist in Him and He does not exist in them. This is the royal secret of this *Yoga.*

Question : *In the perfect Advaitic state, where is the world ?*

Answer : In that state the world does not exist. *Brahman* alone is.

From the dualistic point of view, the position of the world is explained.

6. यथाकाशस्थितो नित्यं वायुः सर्वत्रगो महान् ।
तथा सर्वाणि भूतानि मत्स्थानीत्युपधारय ॥ ६

Yatha'kasasthito nityam vayuh sarvatrago mahan ।
tatha sarvani bhutani matsthani'tyupadharaya ॥ 6

Meaning : यथा *yatha :* just as, सर्वत्रगः *sarvatragah :* moving everywhere, महान् *mahan :* mighty, वायुः *vayuh :* wind, नित्यम् *nityam :* always, आकाशस्थितः *akasasthitah :* rests in ether, तथा *tatha :* so also, सर्वाणि *sarvani :* all, भूतानि *bhutani :* beings, मत्स्थानि इति *mat sthani iti :* (are) in Me, thus, उपधारय *upadharaya :* know.

Substance : Just as the mighty wind moving everywhere is placed in ether, even so know that all beings are in Me.

Commentary : The Lord gives a beautiful simile to explain what He has said in the previous two verses. Just as the mighty wind rests in ether which has no contact with the wind, so also all beings rest in *Brahman*, who is not contaminated by them at all. The objects cannot produce any effect on Him. The mighty wind rests in some part of the elemental ether. So also, the whole universe is in some spot in the supreme *Brahman*. The wind may carry good or foul smell, may be gentle or strong, but ether is not affected by it. So also, the good and bad in man or the actions taking place in the world do not effect *Brahman*. Ether cannot be seen, so also *Paramatma*; ether is subtle, *Paramatma* is more subtle; ether pervades all, so also, *Paramatma* pervades all beings. This illustration of ether and the wind resting in it is intended for the understanding of the common people only. In fact, ether cannot be compared to *Paramatma*,

because ether is insentient, and *Paramatma* on the otherhand is supreme consciousness.

The immediate and direct presence of *Paramatma* is to be realised everywhere and in everything. He is in every particle of the universe. Knowing this, can man commit sin? *Paramatma* is the eternal witness of all. The supremacy of *Paramatma* is clearly to be understood, because in Him is the whole of this wonderful universe. Let not man be imbued with pride and arrogance for the little strength or power or position or beauty or talent that he may possess for a short while.

Question : *Where are the beings placed ?*

Answer : In *Paramatma.*

Question : *How ?*

Answer : Like the wind in elemental ether.

The Lord declares that He is the final cause of creation and dissolution of the universe.

7. सर्वभूतानि कौन्तेय प्रकृतिं यान्ति मामिकाम् ।
कल्पक्षये पुनस्तानि कल्पादौ विसृजाम्यहम् ॥ ७

Sarvabhutani kaunteya prakritim yanti mamikam ।
kalpakshaye punastani kalpadau visrijamyaham ॥

Meaning : कौन्तेय *Kaunteya :* O Arjuna ! सर्वभूतानि *sarvabhutani :* all beings, कल्पक्षये *kalpakshaye :* at the end of a Kalpa, मामिकाम् *mamikam :* Mine (under My control), प्रकृतिम् *prakritim :* to prakriti (Maya-sakti,) यान्ति *yanti :* go, कल्पादौ *kalpadau :* at the beginning of a Kalpa, तानि *tani :* them, पुनः *punah :* again, अहम् *aham :* I, विसृजामि *visrijami:* bring forth.

Substance : O Arjuna ! All beings at the end of a *Kalpa* go into My *Prakriti*; and I bring them forth again at the beginning of a *Kalpa.*

Commentary : All beings are under the power of *Maya*, and *Maya* is under the control of the Lord. So the Lord declares that *prakriti* is His, (i.e.) under His, control. Therefore, one should seek the help and support of the Lord if he should come over *Maya.*

Just as grass grows on earth, and withers away in the earth, just as waves rise in the ocean and disappear in the ocean itself, just as dreams rise in the mind and melt away in the mind itself, even so all beings come out of *Prakriti* and melt into *Prakriti.* When the beings are brought forth it is creation *srishti* and when the beings are withdrawn, it is dissolution *Pralaya.*

Question : *Under whose control is Maya ?*

Answer : Under the control of *Paramatma.*

Question : *What is the fate of those who are under the power of Prakriti ?*

Answer : They are subject to birth and death, creation and dissolution.

8. प्रकृतिं स्वामवष्टभ्य विसृजामि पुनः पुनः ।
भूतग्राममिमं कृत्स्नमवशं प्रकृतेर्वशात् ॥ ८

Prakritim svam avastabhya visrijami punah–punah ।
bhutagramam imam kritsnam avasam prakritervasat ॥ 8

Meaning : प्रकृतेः *prakriteh :* of nature, वशात् *vasat :* by force, अवशम् *avasam :* helpless, इमम् *imam :* this, कृत्स्नम् *kristnam :* all, भूतग्रामम् *bhutagramam :* multitude of beings, स्वाम् *swam :* my, प्रकृतिम् *prakritim :* nature, अवष्टभ्य *avashtabhya :* having animated, पुनःपुनः *punah punah :* again and again, विसृजामि *visrijami :* I bring forth.

Substance : Animating Nature (*Prakriti*) which is Mine own, I emanate again and again all this multitude of beings who are helpless by the force of Nature.

Commentary : The difference between *Jiva* and *Isvara* is clearly brought forth here. The *Jiva* is helpless by the force

of Nature. *Isvara* is the controller of Nature. The *Jiva* is bound by the actions which he does by the force of Nature. All beings come under the power of nature, except those who have gone beyond Nature and reached the ultimate *Paramatma*. The *Jivanmuktas* have gone beyond *Maya*. Nature has no power over them. All other beings come out and go back into Nature endlessly and suffer all the ills and troubles of life and death.

So, it is the duty of every man to purify his own nature which expresses itself in different sensual thoughts and acts by the force of the *gunas – tamas* and *rajas*. Slavery to the *gunas* continues till one transcends them and rises to the plane of pure *sathva*. As the Lord has declared already, those who take refuge in Him easily cross over *Maya* and reach Him.

As persons sitting in the wheel that rotates, rotate till the owner of the wheel stops it, so also, all men are bound to the wheel of life and death, till God stops the wheel for those who seek for His grace.

Question : *To what are all beings bound ?*

Answer : To Nature – (and the works done by them by the force of Nature).

Question : *What should man do to regain his freedom ?*

Answer : He should be devoted to the Lord who takes him beyond *Maya* (beyond the senses and mind and *Karma*).

The Lord declares His non-attachment to the actions of beings.

9. न च मां तानि कर्माणि निबध्नन्ति धनञ्जय ।
उदासीनवदासीनमसक्तं तेषु कर्मसु ॥ ९

Na cha mam tani karmani nibadhnanti dhanamjaya ।
udasinavadasinam asaktam teshu karmasu । 9

Meaning : धनञ्जय *Dhananjaya :* O Arjuna ! च *cha :* and, तेषु कर्मसु *teshu karmasu :* in those actions, असक्तम् *asaktam :*

unattached, उदासीनवत् *udasinavat :* like one indifferent, आसीनम् *asinam :* being, माम् *Mam :* Me, तानि कर्माणि *tani karmani :* those actions, न निबध्नन्ति *na nibadhnanti :* do not bind.

Substance : O Arjuna ! Nor do those actions bind Me, who remain indifferent and unattached to those actions.

Commentary : *Paramatma* is not attached to anything. He is only a witness. In the light of the Sun, all beings carry on various types of activities good and bad. One may read or work, another may commit murder and so on. But these actions do not affect the Sun at all. He is just the witness, that is all, and no more. So also, the Lord is not concerned with the tremendous activity of *Prakriti*. He is unattached, perfectly indifferent to all that is done or not done. Such freedom comes to those who have Self-realisation. Is not that freedom worth having ? Why should man be a slave ? Let one approach the Lord and pray to Him to free him from the shackles which he has forged for himself in a state of ignorance.

The Lord declares that Prakriti creates the universe under His supervision.

10. मयाध्यक्षेण प्रकृतिः सूयते सचराचरम् ।
हेतुनानेन कौन्तेय जगद्विपरिवर्तते ॥ १०

Maya'dhykhsena prakritih suyate sacharacharam ।
hetuna'nena kaunteya jagad viparivartate । 10

Meaning : कौन्तेय *Kaunteya :* O Arjuna ! अध्यक्षेण *adhyakshena :* as supervisor, मया *maya :* by Me, प्रकृतिः *prakritih :* Nature (Maya), सचराचरम् *sacharacharam :* the moving, and the unmoving, सूयते *suyate :* produce, bring forth, अनेन हेतुना *anena hetuna :* by this cause, जगत् *jagat :* the universe, विपरिवर्तते *viparivartate :* revolves.

Substance : O Arjuna ! By me as supervisor *Prakriti* brings forth the moving and unmoving; by this cause, the world revolves.

Commentary : *Prakriti is Jada* insentient; *Paramatma* consciousness. By the immediate presence of *Paramatm* *Prakriti* produces the entire universe. In the vicinity of magnet the iron needle moves. The magnet has no particul agency in this. It is just where it is. This *Paramatma* is in th universe like an unconcerned entity *Udasina*. But His immedia proximity enables *Prakriti* to create things. The wo *adhyakshena* is used here to indicate the non-attachment and th consciousness-Principle of the Lord. An assembly, so to sa has no life till the president takes the chair. A Court, so to sa has no life till the judge takes his seat. When he takes the sea the whole assembly is animated with life and goes into actio So also, *Prakriti* remains inert till it is animated by th presence of the Lord and brings forth the whole univers Without Him, the universe would simply be inert matter an nothing more.

We may take the illustration of the Sun. As the Su rises in the east, each man wakes up and carries on his wor whatever it may be. Good people do good work and ba people do bad work. The Sun has nothing to do with the nature or their actions.

The material world is inert. It has no life or activi by itself. What gives life to it is the Supreme Consciousnes Principle of the Lord Himself. This is not visible to the gro vision. It is the eye of knowledge that sees it. That *Paramatma*. The whole world is super-imposed on the Lor who is the basic *adhishtana* (support). What is super-impose (*aropitam*) cannot be different from the original (*adhishtana*). A the powers that we see exhibited in the universe are derive from the Lord. And yet the Lord is in no way concerned wit or affected by the actions of people in the world. The physic and the mental forces are only the grosser manifestation of th *Atmic* power of the Lord, which is the one power from whic all others are produced by *Prakriti*. The wise man should no be deceived or destroyed by the temptations of the little for or power that he may have in him. He should know that, sma or great, the power is the Lord's and not his own. All th

various forms of *Cosmic* energy, such as matter, thought, force, intelligence and so forth, are simply the manifestations of the *Cosmic* intelligence the Supreme Lord.

Question : *What is the supervising intelligence of the world ?*

Answer : Paramatma.

Question : *How is the world brought forth ?*

Answer : It is produced by *Prakriti* being animated by the power of the Lord.

Men of demonical nature deny the existence of the Lord.

11. अवजानन्ति मां मूढा मानुषीं तनुमाश्रितम् ।
परं भावमजानन्तो मम भूतमहेश्वरम् ॥ ११

Avajananti mam mudha manushim tanum asritam ।
param bhavam ajananto mama bhuta mahesvaram ॥ 11

Meaning : मम *mama* : My, परंभावम् *param bhavam* : higher nature or state, अजानन्तः *ajanantah* : not knowing, मूढाः *mudhah* : the ignorant, भूतमहेश्वरम् *bhutamahesvaram* : the Lord of beings, मानुषीं तनुम् *manushim tanum* : human body, आश्रितम् *asritam* : refuged in, माम् *mam* : Me, अवजानन्ति *avajananti* : disregard.

Substance : The ignorant disregard Me, not knowing My higher nature as the Lord of all beings, refuged in human body.

Commentary : *Paramatma* is the controller of all beings. He is the Lord, Isvara. He has already declared that, though he has no birth, he appears to be born in the world for the purpose of establishing *Dharma* and protecting the righteous. When he assumes the human form, the deluded disregard Him as no more than other mortals. There are some people proud of their position and wealth, ill-treating and abusing saints and *sadhus*. As the saints and *sadhus* are devoid of worldly goods like wealth and position, some people show no respect for them. The *Bhakta* and *Bhagavan* are one. The Lord is present in His

devotees and they have to be honoured as such. Sisupala and Duryodhana never understood the Divine nature of Lord Krishna. It was only Bhishma and a few others who recognised the Divinity of Krishna.

Those who are engaged in sptritual practise should be careful about the wrong view and opinions expressed by the common people. Honour and dishonour come to them, honour from the wise and dishonour from the unwise. In such situations, the seeker has to be firm and steady, and not yield to the common reactions of elation and anger. Let the seeker avoid the company of those who deny God, and abuse sages and saints. By his own elevated thoughts and actions, he should set an example of purity and godliness to others.

Question: *What is the state of Paramatma?*

Answer : He is the (1) controller of all human beings and (2) assumes human form for establishing *Dharma.*

Question: *What is the nature of the ignorant?*

Answer : They disregard the Lord, thinking Him to be only a common mortal.

Question: *From this, what is it that we understand?*

Answer : One should try to understand the true state of God and avoid abuse of saints, *Bhaktas* and other Godly men.

12. मोघाशा मोघकर्माणो मोघज्ञाना विचेतसः ।
राक्षसीमासुरीं चैव प्रकृतिं मोहिनीं श्रिताः ॥ १२

Moghasa moghakarmano moghajnana vichetasah
rakshasim asurim chai'va prakritim mohinim sritah 12

Meaning: मोघाशाः *moghasah* : of vain hopes, मोघकर्माणः *moghakarmanah* : of vain actions, मोघज्ञानाः *moghajnanah* : of vain knowledge, विचेतसः *vichetasah* : devoid of understanding, मोहिनीम् *mohinim* : deluding. राक्षसीम् *rakshasim* : devilish, आसुरीम् च *asurim cha* : and undivine, प्रकृतिम् एव *prakritim eva* : verily nature, श्रिताः *sritah* : (are) possessed of.

Substance: Of vain hopes, of vain actions, of vain knowledge, and senseless, they verily are possessed of the deluding nature of the devilish and the undivine.

Commentary: Human nature is divided into two types (1) the Divine (*Daivi Prakriti*) and (2) the undivine (*Asuri-prakriti*). The Lord is here referring to the latter men of undivine nature. Their hopes are vain, empty, their actions are vain, producing nothing good or permanent. Their knowledge is also vain, because it is confined to the senses and the perishable world. Such knowledge viewed from the spiritual plane is empty, vain and useless. They are devoid of understanding and so they have no thought of anything beyond the body. Such men are possessed of the devilish and undivine nature. The *Tamasic Guna* or the dark quality of *Prakriti* characterises the beings here spoken of as *rakshasic* and *asuric*. *Rakshasas* are semi-human beings, brutal and blood-thirsty. The *asuras* are the opponents of the *Devas*. The *Devas* have *sattvaguna*. The *asuras* possess *rajoguna*. They have evil desires and use their powers in evil ways. Their life is useless. That is why the word useless (*mogha*) is repeated three times in this verse. The point is that all those people live in the empty world of *Maya*. So whatever they do or think or hope is empty nothing, signifying nothing.

The seekers have to understand the sharp distinction between the real and unreal. *Atma* alone is real. Nothing else. Knowing this, they should move towards the Reality, giving up all foolish and vain hopes and actions. They should cultivate the good qualities like self-control, sense-restraint, discrimination and humility. They should become the instruments of the Divine. They should be the servants of the Lord. Their thoughts and actions should follow the divine law.

Question: *What is 'asuric' nature?*

Answer : It deludes man and plunges him in ignorance.

Question : *How do such people act ?*

Answer : Their hopes, actions and knowledge are vain.

Question : *What should be the conduct of rational men ?*

Answer : They should abandon the Asuric force and seek refuge with the Lord, think and act in accordance with His law.

In two verses the Lord describes men of Divine nature.

13. महात्मानस्तु मां पार्थ दैवीं प्रकृतिमाश्रिताः ।
भजन्त्यनन्यमनसो ज्ञात्वा भूतादिमव्ययम् ॥ १३

Mahatmanastu mam partha daivim prakritim asritah ।
bhajantyananya manaso jnatva bhutadim avyayam । 13

Meaning : पार्थ *partha* : O Arjuna ! महात्मानः तु *mahatmanah tu* : but great souls, दैवीम् *dalvim* : divine, प्रकृतिम् *prakritim* : nature, आश्रिताः *asritah* : possessed of, माम् *mam* : Me, भूतादिम् *bhutadim* : origin of all beings, अव्ययम् *avyayam* : imperishable, ज्ञात्वा *jnatva* : knowing (Me), अनन्यमनसः *ananyamanasah* : unswerving minds, भजन्ति *bhajanti* : worship.

Substance : O Arjuna ! But great souls possessing divine nature worship Me, knowing Me to be origin of all beings, and imperishable.

Commentary : In the 16th Discourse, *Asura Prakriti* and *Daivi Prakriti* are explained in full detail.

Those who take refuge in Divine nature are described as great souls *(mahatmanah)*. They worship the Lord with unswerving minds, because they identify the Lord with two great attributes. (1) The Lord is the final cause of all beings. (2) He is imperishable. These two attributes are not to be found in any other thing or person. The Lord is the Ancient, beyond birth and death, and universal. Thus the great souls distinguish the Lord from all other material or superficial things. They are able to see clearly how every thing is going through a process

of change, whereas the eternal Lord remains changeless. Therefore their mind is ever contemplating the Lord with unswerving devotion.

Ananyamanasah : When the mind stops its wandering habit and rests in the Self, it is declared as unswerving mind (*ananyamanash*). When the mind fully understands the transitoriness of the world and the eternal bliss of *Atma*, it ceases to run out towards sense objects. That is why the word knowing (*Jnatva*) is used here. One has faith in that which he knows. Then only the mind comes to rest there. It is dispassion (*Vairagya*). It is single-minded devotion to the Lord.

Whoever takes refuge in the Divine nature and understands the Lord as the imperishable, final cause and is devoted to him, is a *mahatma* (great soul). The title *mahatma* has no reference to caste, race or religion. Those who yield to the undivine and asuric nature are *alpatmas* (little souls).

Generally the mind of the common man is like a fly which sits on pure sweetmeats for sometime and then settle on some other filthy objects. The mind should be trained to sustain itself on Divine thoughts always. Mind thus being purified, takes the form of 'chit' (knowledge). That state is *Moksha.*

Question : *How do those people who follow divine nature act ?*

Answer : Knowing the Lord to be imperishable and the final cause of all objects and beings, they worship Him with single-minded devotion.

Question : *What is the nature of Paramatma ?*

Answer : (1) Imperishable, (2) final cause of all objects and beings.

Question : *Who is a Mahatma ?*

Answer : He who takes refuge in Divine nature, understands the Lord's state, and worships Him, is a *Mahatma.*

Question : *How can one cultivate single-minded devotion to God ?*

Answer : By understanding His real nature–that He is the origin of all beings, the imperishable. He develops faith in

Him as the only Reality, and by such faith his mind naturally comes to rest in Him only.

14. सततं कीर्तयन्तो मां यतन्तश्च दृढव्रताः।
नमस्यन्तश्च मां भक्त्या नित्ययुक्ता उपासते ॥ १४

Satatam kirtayanto mam yatantas cha dridha vratah ।
namasyantas cha mam bhaktya nityayukta upasate ॥ 14

Meaning: सततम् *satatam:* always, माम् *mam:* Me, कीर्तयन्तः *kirtayantah:* glorifying, दृढव्रता *dhrudhavratah:* firm in vows, यतन्तश्च *yatantah cha:* and striving, भक्त्याः *bhaktya:* with devotion, नमस्यन्तश्च *namasyantah cha:* and prostrating, नित्ययुक्ताः *nityayuktah:* always steadfast, माम् *mam:* Me, उपासते *upasate:* worship.

Substance: Always glorifying Me, striving firm in vows, prostrating before Me with devotion, always steadfast, the men of divine nature worship Me.

Commentary: In the previous verse it is declared that the *mahatmas* worship the Lord with single-minded devotion. Here the manner of worship is explained. They think, sing and speak of the Lord's glory always. Such adoration comes through constant striving. The striving is not intermittent but continuous. They are steadfast in vows.

The Lord emphasises firmness many times. The mind is saturated with powerful past *samskaras*, impurities of *raga* and *dvesha*, acquired through several births. They cannot be eliminated except by firmness and steadfast striving. The seeker has to practice certain vows to purify the body and mind (fasting, silence, *japa*, *dhyana*, *brahmacharya*). These vows should be followed with cheerfulness, courage and determination. Otherwise progress on the spiritual path is obstructed and the seekers are drawn away from the goal by the force of ignorance (*avidya*). Firm vows are strong weapons with which *avidya* could be defeated and overcome.

Nitya yuktah: They are always attached to the Lord, with devotion. Their worship is illumined by devotion. It is noteworthy how the Lord emphasises devotion to Him at every step. It is not merely intellectual understanding but deep emotional realisation which lead to the Lord. Patanjali says:

'Devotional acts of *Dhyana* continued for a long time without any break leads the aspirant to the firmly established state in God.'

Question *How do the mahatmas worship God?*

Answer : They glorify Him, steadfast in vows they strive, they worship Him with devotion, they keep the mind steady in Him.

Question: *From this, what do we understand as the way to God-realisation?*

Answer : (1) Continuous memory of God, (2) firmness in vows, (3) devotion, (4) concentrated thought of God.

Question: *How should one remember God?*

Answer : Always.

Question: *How should the vows be practised?*

Answer : Firm and steadfast.

Question: *How should one worship God?*

Answer : With devotion.

The Lord declares that men worship Him in many ways.

15. ज्ञानयज्ञेन चाप्यन्ये यजन्तो मामुपासते।
एकत्वेन पृथक्त्वेन बहुधा विश्वतोमुखम् ॥ १५

Jnanayajnena cha'pyanye yajanto mam upasate ।
ekatvena prithaktvena bahudha visvatomukham ॥ 15

Meaning: अन्ये अपि *anye api:* also others, ज्ञानयज्ञेनच *jnanayajnena cha:* by knowledge sacrifice, यजन्तः *yajantah:* sacrificing, एकत्वेन *ekatvena:* with oneness (Advaitabhava),

पृथक्त्वेन *prithaktvena :* as different (worshipping various Devas as Brahma etc.) (Dvaitabhava), बहुधा *bahudha :* in various ways, विश्वतोमुखम् *visvatomukham :* universal in form (Sarvatmabhava), माम् *mam :* Me, उपासते *upasate :* worship.

Substance : Others also sacrificing with 'knowledge-sacrifice', worship Me the universal, as one, as distinct, and as manifold.

Commentary : It is declared here that men worship Him in various ways, some as one Reality, identifying themselves with the One, others making a distinction between the Lord and themselves, and yet others in manifold forms. All these seekers finally reach the goal through different paths. The point to note is that the manner of worship may take any form provided that it is done with complete and immovable faith.

What is *jnanayajna* ?

'*Brahman* is real, the world is illusion. The *Jiva* is *Brahman* and not distinct.' – This knowledge is *jnana*. To hold on to this is knowledge-sacrifice *(Jnana Yajna)*. This is the *Advaitic* realisation. This is '*tat tvam asi*' thought. This is '*so ham*' experience. When Lord Krishna completes the Gita Sastra, He declares that he who studies and tries to understand the spirit of the Gita is said to have worshipped the Lord through Knowledge-sacrifice (18-70). All people whatever their attitudes and styles of worship may be, shall have to understand at last that there is only One Reality and that Reality is nothing other than his own Self. This is the only way to liberation and this is *Jnanayajna.*

Viswatomukham : The Lord is universal, existing every where and in each and every thing. He is *Paramatma* and there is nothing else but He in all that one sees and experiences in all the worlds. This universal concept is the highest law of religion, and perhaps the easiest way to God-Realisation. Let this law be remembered by all, at all times, in all places and under all circumstances.

Question : *How do people worship the Lord ?*

Answer : Some people worship Him with Advaitic attitude and others with dualistic attitude, each man according to his *samskara* worship Him in different ways.

In four verses the universal presence of the Lord is declared.

16. अहं क्रतुरहं यज्ञः स्वधाहमहमौषधम् ।
मन्त्रोऽहमहमेवाज्यमहमग्निरहं हुतम् ॥ १६

Aham kratur aham yajnah svadha'ham aham aushadham ।
mantro'ham aham eva'jyam aham agnir aham hutam ॥ 16

Meaning : अहम् *aham :* I, क्रतुः *kratuh :* a kind of vedic sacrifice, अहम् *aham :* I, यज्ञः *yajnah :* the sacrifice, अहम् स्वधा *aham svadha :* I, the offering to Pitris (ancestors), अहम् औषधम् *aham aushadham :* I, the medicinal herbs or plants, अहम् *aham :* I, मन्त्रः *mantrah :* the sacred syllables, अहमेव *aham eva :* I also, आज्यम् *ajyam :* the ghee, अहम् *aham :* I, अग्निः *agnih :* the sacred fire, अहम् *aham :* I, हुतम् *hutam :* the offering.

Substance : I am Kratu, I am the sacrifice, I am the offering (food) to the Pitris, the ancestors; I am the medicinal herbs and plants, I am the *Mantra*, the clarified butter, the Fire, and the offering.

Commentary : The universality of the Lord is declared by a number of illustrations. The seeker has to understand that the Lord is All, and everything. The false notion that man is seperate should be destroyed in the contemplation of the universal presence of the Lord in all objects and acts.

17. पिताहमस्य जगतो माता धाता पितामहः ।
वेद्यं पवित्रमोङ्कार ऋक्साम यजुरेव च ॥ १७

Pita'ham asya jagato mata dhata pitamahah ।
vedyam pavitram omkara rik sama yajur eva cha ॥ 17

Meaning : अस्य जगतः *asyajagatah :* of this world, अहम् एव *aham eva :* I only, पिता *pita :* father, माता *mata :* mother, धाता *dhata :* the dispenser of the fruits of actions, पितामहः *pitamahah :* grand–father, वेद्यम् *vedyam :* one to be known, पवित्रम् *pavitram :* purifier, ओंकारः *Omkarah :* OM Pranava, ऋक् साम यजुः च *rik sama yajuh cha :* Rigveda, Sama Veda and Yajurveda.

Substance : Of this world I am the father, mother, the dispenser, grand–father, the One to be known, the purifier, *Pranava* (OM.), and also *Rigveda, Yajurveda* and *Samaveda.*

Commentary : One's relationship with mortals is very temporary. So long as the body lasts, the relationship exists, and soon after the body falls, it is all over. This is experienced by all every day. The Lord is the eternal Father, Mother and Grand-father. At all times whether in this life or beyond, He is with us always. When one is under the protecting power of the Divine Parents, there cannot be any fear in life or death. So the love that one has for his earthly relations should be sublimated into divine love for the Lord who confers *Moksha* as the highest reward of devotion.

The one thing to be known in this world is the Lord. All other knowledge is of no use if it does not lead to an understanding of the Lord. Knowing *Paramatma,* man knows verything. Not knowing Him, man knows nothing even if he has read all the books in the world.

Omkarah : It has already said that the syllable OM (*Pranava*) is most sacred and contains the very essence of all the *Vedas.*

Question : *What is the state of Paramatma ?*

Answer : He is the father, mother and grand–father of the world.

Question : *What is the one thing to be known ?*

Answer : Paramatma.

Question : *What is the purest ?*

Answer : Paramatma.

Question : *What is the other manifestations of Paramatma ?*

Answer : He is *Pranava,* He is all the *Vedas.*

18. गतिर्भर्ता प्रभुः साक्षी निवासः शरणं सुहृत् ।
प्रभवः प्रलयः स्थानं निधानं बीजमव्ययम् ॥ १८

Gatir bharta prabhuh sakshi nivasah saranam suhrit
prabhavah pralayah sthanam nidhanam bijam avyayam । 18

Meaning : गतिः *gatih :* the goal, भर्ता *bharta :* the supporter, प्रभुः *prabhuh :* the Lord, साक्षी *sakshi :* the witness, निवासः *nivasah :* the abode, शरणम् *saranam :* shelter, सुहृत् *suhrit :* the friend, प्रभवः स्थानम् प्रलयः *prabhavah sthanam pralayah :* the origin, the foundation, the dissolution, निधानम् *nidhanam :* the treasure–house, अव्ययम् *avyayam :* imperishable, बीजम् *bijam :* the seed.

Substance : I am the goal, the supporter, the Lord, the witness, the abode, the shelter, the friend, the origin, the dissolution, the foundation, the treasure-house, and the seed imperishable.

Commentary : *Bharta* : The Lord is the supporter of all beings, men and women. He is *Jagat Bharta.* People should consider the Lord as their supporter and worship Him with all their heart and soul.

He is the Lord of all the world. All other positions of power are nothing before Him. So the rich and the poor, the strong and the weak alike should surrender to the Lord, as He is the Supreme controller of all the worlds.

He is the witness of everything that is being done in the world. The good and bad done by man are directly seen by the Lord. So one should be very careful in his doings.

He is the abode of all the world. Man lives and moves in the Lord. It is a gross error to say that one lives here and

there. The true address of man is always *Paramatma* in whom the whole universe resides.

He is the refuge and shelter of all beings. It is from Him that man obtains the largest reward of *Moksha*.

He is the friend of friends, ever present and never failing.

He is the cause, the origin and dissolution of all beings. By His presence, the universe goes into action like the iron rod in the nearness of the magnet.

He is the origin of all beings. So whatever may be the birth of man, he should remember that his ancient ancestor, his *'gotra'*, his home, is God Himself. Originating from *Paramatma*, how can man think of himself as vile, weak, wretched and miserable ? To be true to oneself man should know clearly that he is of the same nature as God Himself, because He is the true origin of all beings.

Question : *What is the state of Paramatma ?*

Answer : He is the goal, supporter, Lord, witness, abode, refuge, friend, dissolution, foundation, treasure-house, and the seed imperishable of all beings.

19. तपाम्यहमहं वर्षं निगृह्णाम्युत्सृजामि च ।
अमृतं चैव मृत्युश्च सदसच्चाहमर्जुन ॥ १९

Tapamyaham aham varsham nigrihnamyutsrijami cha ।
amritam chai'va mrityus cha sadasacha'ham arjuna ॥ 19

Meaning : अर्जुन *Arjuna* : O Arjuna ! अहम् *aham* : I, तपामि *tapami* : cause heat, अहम् *aham* : I, वर्षम् *varsham* : rain, उत्सृजामि च *ucchrijami cha* : and send forth, निगृह्णामि *nigrihnami* : withhold, अमृतं च *amritam cha* : and immortality, मृत्युश्च *mrityuh cha* : and death, सत् *sat* : existence, असत् च *asat cha* : and non-existence, अहम् एव *aham eva* : I also.

Substance : O Arjuna ! I cause heat (as Sun) and I am rain; I withhold and send forth (rain), I am immortality and also death, I am existence and non-existence.

Commentary : The Lord is the cause for the origin of the world and all the activities taking place in it. As an illustration, the phenomena of rain is explained here. The Sun causes heat and absorbs water and then again releases it in the form of rain. The whole of the natural phenomena as we understand is the work of the Lord Himself. If we extent the analogy, we will find that every force, small or great, is nothing but the manifestation of the Lord.

When the rope is mistaken for the snake, the rope, as the foundation, has not in any way changed. So also, what appears as the universe is in reality *Brahman*. So everything in the world like death and immortality, like existence and non-existence relatively is nothing but *Brahman*.

The fruit of sacrifices performed with desire is explained.

20. त्रैविद्या मां सोमपाः पूतपापा
यज्ञैरिष्ट्वा स्वर्गतिं प्रार्थयन्ते ।
ते पुण्यमासाद्य सुरेन्द्रलोकम्
अश्नन्ति दिव्यान्दिवि देवभोगान् ॥ २०

Traividya mam somapah putapapa
yajnairishva svargatim prarthayante ।
te punyam asadya surendralokam
asnanti divyan divi devabhogan ॥ 20

Meaning : त्रैविद्याः *traividyah* : the knowers of the Vedas, सोमपाः *somapah* : the drinkers of Soma, पूतपापाः *putapapah* : purified of sins, यज्ञैः *yajnaih* : by sacrifices, माम् *mam* : Me, इष्ट्वा *ishtva* : worshipping, स्वर्गतिम् *svargatim* : the way to Heaven, प्रार्थयन्ते *prarthayante* : pray for, ते *te* : they, पुण्यम् *punyam* : happy, सुरेन्द्रलोकम् *surendralokam* : the world of Indra, आसाद्य *asadya* : having attained, दिवि *divi* : in Heaven,

दिव्यान् *divyan* : divine, देवभोगान् *devabhogan* : pleasures of the *Devas*, अश्नन्ति *asnanti* : enjoy (eat).

Substance : The knowers of the *Vedas*, the drinkers of *Soma*, purified of sins, worshipping Me by sacrifices, pray for the way to Heaven. They having attained the world of Indra, enjoy the heavenly pleasures of the *Devas*.

Commentary : The Lord here describes the attitude of some aspirants who seek for the pleasures of Heaven by performing sacrifices. They are learned men who have studied the *Vedas*; they are purified by sacrifices; but they are attached to sense-pleasures, and so they desire for the finer and subtler enjoyments of the Gods. Their prayer is for heavenly joys. And they get them by the merit of their *Yajnas*. They are evolved beings no doubt, but they are imperfect because they have not realised the Brahmananda arising from Self-realisation. Whatever world it is, however rich and exhilarating the pleasures of the Gods may be, they are subject to death and birth. They have to return.

What if the shackles are made of gold? They are still bonds which limit the immeasurable joy of self-realisation. That cannot be the goal. The cycle of birth and death should be stopped by knowing the truth, which alone brings freedom to man. To be a slave to sense-pleasures either here or in Heaven cannot satisfy the true aspirant. He should aim at the highest, the Atmic state, attaining which he is forever in bliss and blessedness.

Therefore the wise man should strive for the Eternal state of *Brahman*, and not the transitory enjoyments of Heaven or any other world. The *Vedas* deal with sacrifices and other forms of worship which lead to enjoyment, but that is not the end of the *Vedas*. The end is *Brahma-Jnana*, and all people should have to come up to this goal. Sacrifices purify the mind, if they are performed without any desire for the fruit thereof. But if man performs these things with attachment he cannot derive the necessary purity to remain steadfast in the contemplation of the Self.

The deluded soul thirsting for enjoyment prays to the Lord for Heavenly joys through the performance of sacrifices. How unwise it would be to stand before the Supreme Lord and pray for such meagre pleasures of Heaven? Is not the Lord the very source of all bliss and blessedness? Why not pray for union with Him? Why not pray for the bliss of liberation?

If liberation is the goal of mankind, the question may arise why the Vedas have so elaborately described the *Yajnas* yielding various worldly and other-worldly benefits? What is its purpose? The answer is that man has to be weaned away from lower sinful pleasures by presenting before him the purer and more lasting joys of Heaven. The *Vedas* have done this. Man is partially rescued from the clutches of earthly things and sinful activities. Then after many many births, the same man would find out for himself that he has no rest wherever he might go, and that he has to fall back to the earth again and again. When he realises the uselessness of these enjoyments, then he would naturally seek for a joy that would not come to an end, and that joy cannot be had anywhere else except in the Self *Atma*.

Question : *What is the reward of performing sacrifices?*

Answer : Enjoyment of Heaven.

21. ते तं भुक्त्वा स्वर्गलोकं विशालं
क्षीणे पुण्ये मर्त्यलोकं विशन्ति ।
एवं त्रयीधर्ममनुप्रपन्ना
गतागतं कामकामा लभन्ते ॥ २१

Te tam bhuktva svargalokam visalam
kshine punye martyalokam visanti ।
evam trayidharmam anuprapanna
gatagatam kamakama labhante ॥ 21

Meaning: ते *te* : they, तं विशालम् *tam visalam* : that spacious, स्वर्गलोकम् *svargalokam* : heaven world, भुक्त्वा *bhuktva* : having enjoyed, क्षीणे पुण्ये *kshine punye* : merit being

exhausted, मर्त्यलोकम् *martyalokam:* world of mortals, विशन्ति *visanti:* enter, एवम् *evam:* in this way, त्रयीधर्मम् *trayidharmam:* the law of Vedas, अनुप्रपन्नाः *anuprapannah:* abiding by, कामकामाः *kama kamah:* desiring desires, गतागतम् *gatagatam:* going and returning, लभन्ते *labhante:* get.

Substance: They having enjoyed the vast Heaven-world, the merit being exhausted, enter the world of mortals; thus, those who desire enjoyments, abiding by the law of the *Vedas* have to go and return endlessly.

Commentary: The Lord explains very clearly how the desire-prompted men do not find rest either here or in Heaven. They have to go through the painful process of birth and death. Dying here, they go to Heaven and from there, after exhausting the fruits of merit (*punya*) they fall back again to the earth, and take birth as mortals. Such is the fate of men yielding to desire, however rich and vast it might be. From this one understands that human life is the only opportunity for Self-realisation. All the other worlds are worlds of enjoyment, good or bad. This world is the world of action and *jnana*. Let us hear the exhortation of Swami Vivekananda–"Man therefore according to *Vedanta* philosophy is the greatest being that is in the universe, and the world of work is the best place in it, because only herein is the greatest and best chance for him to become perfect. Angels or Gods, whatever you may call them, have all to become men, if they want to be perfect. This is the greatest centre, the wonderful poise, and the wonderful opportunity—this human life."

The *Vedas* follow a rational order with reference to human life and man's progress and perfection. The first part is *Karma Kanda*, the second *Upasana Kanda*, and the third *Janana Kanda*. We see how man develops gradually and reaches perfection. The *Karma Kanda* deals with the desire–fulfilling actions of man. When man discovers that these desires and their fulfilment do not give him rest or peace, he discards them and rises a step higher, and finally, remains at perfection in the realisation of God. He comes to the *Jnana Kanda*.

Karma is no doubt good in itself, but it should be free from desire and attachment. Otherwise man has to undergo the painful process of being born again and again either here or in the other worlds. In the *Samkhya–yoga* and in many other places, the Lord emphasises the need for the elimination of desire as the only way to perfection. Desire implies imperfection. The perfect man cannot have any desires.

The desireless state of perfection should be the goal of all spiritual aspirants.

Question: *What is the reward of yajnas ?*

Answer : Enjoyment in Heaven.

Question: *How long ?*

Answer : Till the merit (*punya*) is exhausted.

Question: *What happens then ?*

Answer : He returns to the world of mortals.

Question: *What is the fate of those who have desires ?*

Answer : They are subject to birth and death.

Question: *What is the nature of Heaven ?*

Answer : It is a vast place of enjoyment, and has an end.

How the Lord takes care of the true devotee is declared.

22. अनन्याश्चिन्तयन्तो मां ये जनाः पर्युपासते ।
तेषां नित्याभियुक्तानां योगक्षेमं वहाम्यहम् ॥ २२

Ananyaschintayanto mam ye janah paryupasate
tesham nityabhiyuktanam yogakshemam vahamyaham 22

Meaning : ये जनाः *ye janah:* those who, अनन्याः *ananyah:* without other thoughts, माम् *mam:* Me, चिन्तयन्तः *chintayantah:* thinking, पर्युपासते *paryupasate:* worship (Me) continuously, तेषाम् *tesham:* of them, नित्याभियुक्तानां *nityayuktam:* ever united with Me, योगक्षेमम् *yogakshemam:* yoga and kshema, अहम् *aham:* I, वहामि *wahami:* carry.

Substance : Of those men who worship Me alone, thinking of no other, ever united with Me, I carry their *yoga* (securing things which they do not possess) and *kshema* (preserving what they possess.)

Commentary : This is one of the most important verses in the Gita. As it occurs in the middle of the Gita, we may describe it as the most precious gem in the Gita-diamond-garland. This is the Lord's promise of protection for the devotee. He takes upon Himself the responsibility of the devotee who is ever united with Him. *Yoga* means securing things which are not already possessed by the devotee. *Kshema* means preservation of things already possessed. Nothing can cause fear to the true devotee about his welfare, as the Lord Himself has taken over the entire responsibility. Let him be true to Him, and the never-failing hand of God is always there to protect him. The Lord knows full well that His devotees have given their all to Him, and have nothing of their own. Such things as the devotee needs, are supplied by the Lord Himself, under all circumstances. What should be the attitude of the true devotee ? He should have no other thought except that of the Lord.

Ananyah : 'Not other' is *ananyah*. That is, the devotee has nothing other than the Lord, and his mind does not move away from the Lord towards any other thing. This type of devotee is far different from others who desire enjoyments in Heaven, or in other worlds. The latter also worships the Lord, but his mind is attached to enjoyments. This is not '*ananya-bhakti*.' The devotee mentioned in this verse has no relish for anything except the Lord. All other things upto *Brahmaloka* are trash for him. He discards them all as loathsome stuff. Such a devotee is the Lord's own. To have such devotion distinguishes the true *Bhakta* whose responsibilities are taken over by the Lord Himself.

What infinite compassion ! What assurance of protection ! Arjuna gave away the reins into the hands of the Lord. So should the devotee surrender himself to the Lord, and the result

of such surrender is the protection of the Lord under all circumstances. What is needed by the devotee—either some worldly goods for the maintenance of the body or *Atma-jnana* —both are provided by Him.

The devotee has nothing else to do except to devote himself to the Lord's worship and all else is looked after by the Lord.

The devotee may be in a desert or a mountain-cave or a forest, the Lord follows him like a calf following the mother-cow. The biographies of saints and *sadhus* show how the Lord at every step was with them, in them, and around them. Their life-stories should give courage to the solitary seeker, who is treading the holy path of Self-realisation in the middle of the tremendous dangers and distractions of worldly life.

God's grace is like the wind, and sun-light. Without distinction of caste or creed, age or sex, His grace pervades all. He is the friend of all. Let one be sincere and truthful. Let one's devotion be honest and straight-forward. Let one have faith, and the Lord's promise is there to protect him.

The Lord should be worshipped continuously and always.

Atmajnana is the greatest boon that the Lord could confer on His devotees. Whatever little *sadhana* one does sincerely is protected and strengthened by the Lord.

Steadfast and ceaseless memory of the Lord is emphasised here.

Question : *How to meditate on the Lord ?*

Answer : The devotee should give up all other thoughts and think of the Lord. He should not have any attachment for any worldly things.

Question : *What is the effect ?*

Answer : He receives God's grace. God Himself takes over his responsibilities both secular and spiritual.

Question : *What then should man do to obtain God's grace ?*

Answer : He should worship the Lord with single-minded devotion.

Those who worship other Devas worship the Lord only, though by a wrong method.

23. येऽप्यन्यदेवता भक्ता यजन्ते श्रद्धयाऽन्विताः।
तेऽपि मामेव कौन्तेय यजन्त्यविधिपूर्वकम् ॥ २३

Ye'py anyadevata bhakta yajante sraddhaya'nvitah ı
Te'pi mam eva kaunteya yajantyavidhipurvakam ॥ 23

Meaning : कौन्तेय *Kaunteya* : O Arjuna ! येऽपि *yepi* : even those who, अन्यदेवताभक्ताः *anyadevata bhaktah* : devotees of other Devas, श्रद्धयान्विताः *sraddhayanvitah* : endowed with faith, यजन्ते *yajante* : worship, तेऽपि *tepi* : they also, मामेव *mam eva* : Me only, अविधिपूर्वकम् *avidhipurvakam* : by the wrong method, यजन्ति *yajanti* : worship.

Substance : O Arjuna ! Even those devotees, who endowed with faith, worship other Gods, worship Me only by the wrong method.

Commentary : Some devotees worship, not the formless *Brahmam* but other Gods with name and form. If their devotion is sincere, they, in a sense, worship the supreme who is the foundation for all Devas. This form of worship is a wrong method. They are not worshipping the Supreme directly. So there is a difference in the fruits of merit. The various Devas may confer different rewards of health and wealth, children and prosperity in worldly life, but the worship of the Supreme confers the highest reward of *Moksha* (liberation). Whatever may be the object of worship, faith is essential. With such faith if the Lord is worshipped the devotee obtains liberation.

Question : *How should man worship God ?*

Answer : With faith.

24. अहं हि सर्वयज्ञानां भोक्ता च प्रभुरेव च।
न तु मामभिजानन्ति तत्त्वेनातश्च्यवन्ति ते ॥ २४

Aham hi sarvayajnanam bhokta cha prabhur eva cha ।
Na tu mam abhijananti tattvena'tascyhyavanti te ॥

Meaning : हि *hi* : verily, सर्वयज्ञानाम् *sarvayajnanam* : of all sacrifices, भोक्ता च *bhokta cha* : and enjoyer, प्रभुः एव च *prabhuh eva cha* : and Lord also, अहम् एव *aham eva* : I alone, माम् तु *mam tu* : but me, ते *te* : they, तत्त्वेन *tattvena* : in essence, न अभिजानन्ति : *na abhijananti* : not known, अतः *atah* : hence, च्यवन्ति *chyavanti* : fall.

Substance : I am alone the enjoyer and the Lord of all sacrifices; but they do not know Me in reality, hence they fall.

Commentary : *Paramatma* is the Lord of all sacrifices. Not possessing this knowledge, the worshippers of other Gods fall down into the mire of *Samsara* again and again. So long as this knowledge of the universal presence of the Lord is not understood, man falls into *Samsara*. That there is only One essential Reality should be understood and realised in essence. This knowledge promotes man from any kind of fall. Therefore it is the duty of the aspirant to rise to the highest plane from whence there is no fall (*Chyuti*). The Lord is known as *Achyuta*, for, attaining Him, there is no '*Chyuti*' (fall) for man.

Question : *Who is the enjoyer and Lord of all sacrifices ?*

Answer : Paramatma.

Question : *Why does man fall into samsara ?*

Answer : Because he does not possess the knowledge of the Supreme.

Question : *What then is the way to transcend Samsara ?*

Answer : The understanding and direct knowledge of the Supreme.

The worshippers of the Devas go to Devas, and the worshippers of the Lord go to Him.

25. यान्ति देवव्रता देवान्पितॄन्यान्ति पितृव्रताः ।
भूतानि यान्ति भूतेज्या यान्ति मद्याजिनोऽपि माम् ॥ २५

Yanti devavrata devan pitrin yanti pitrivratah ।
bhutani yanti bhutejya yanti madyajino'pi mam ॥ 25

Meaning : देवव्रताः *devavratah* : worshippers of the Devas or Gods, देवान् *Devan :* to the Devas, यान्ति *yanti :* go, पितृव्रताः *pitrivratah :* the worshippers of ancestors, पितॄन् *pitrin :* to the ancestors, यान्ति *yanti :* go, भूतेज्याः *bhutejyah :* the worshippers of the Bhutas, भूतानि *bhutani :* to the Bhutas, यान्ति *yanti :* go, मद्याजिनः अपि *madyajinah api :* and my worshippers, माम् *mam :* to me, यान्ति *yanti :* go.

Substance : The worshippers of the *Devas* go to the *Devas*; the worshippers of the ancestors go to the ancestors; the worshippers of the *Bhutas* go to the *Bhutas*; and the worshippers of Me go to Me.

Commentary : The Lord states the universal law that the object of one's worship will determine the goal that he reaches. No one gets anything other than what he thinks intensely. Naturally the wise man chooses the imperishable goal of *Paramatma* who liberates him from all bondage and gives him complete freedom and perfection. Of what use is to worship this or that *Deva* or *Pitri* or *Bhuta*, who can only give some perishable things and once again throws man down into *Samsara* ? Let the aspirant think clearly of the goal he has to reach. Let him not be content with lesser things which have brought misery and death endlessly. Let him aspire for the highest perfection by worshipping the Supreme Lord. Let the '*Devavrata*' (worshipper of the Devas) transform himself into '*Atmavrata.*'-(worshipper of *Atma*). Then he reaches the blissful state of *Paramatma*, and all his wishes and desires shall find fulfilment in that Realisation.

Question : *Where does the worshipper go ?*

Answer : He goes to the object of his worship–Devas or Pitris etc.

Question : *Where shall he go who worships Paramatma ?*

Answer : He reaches *Paramatma*, the Supreme Lord.

The Lord accepts any little thing offered to Him with devotion.

26. पत्रं पुष्पं फलं तोयं यो मे भक्त्या प्रयच्छति ।
तदहं भक्त्युपहृतमश्नामि प्रयतात्मनः ॥ २६

Patram pushpam phalam toyam
yo me bhaktya prayacchati ।
tad aham bhaktyupahritam
asnami prayatatmanah ॥ 26

Meaning : यः *yah :* who, मे *me :* to Me, भक्त्या *bhaktya :* with devotion, पत्रम् *patram :* leaf, पुष्पम् *pushpam :* flower, फलम् *phalam :* fruit, तोयम् *toyam :* water, प्रयच्छति *prayacchati:* offers, प्रयतात्मनः *prayatatmanah :* of that pure-minded man, भक्त्युपहृतम् *bhaktyupahritam :* offered with devotion, तत् *tat :* that (leaf, fruit etc.), अहम् *aham :* I, अश्नामि *asnami :* eat (accept).

Substance : Whoever offers Me with devotion a leaf, a fruit, a flower, or water, that I accept of the pure-minded man offered with devotion.

Commentary : This verse is very important for all the aspirants. In the previous verse, it was stated that the worshipper invariably goes to the object of his worship. If the Lord is the objective, the worshipper reaches Him. The same discipline and devotion needed for the worship of other *Devas* is enough to please the Lord. This being so, why should he have a lesser and lower objective than the Lord Himself ? The Lord explains the very easy nature of His worship. No elaborate sacrifices are needed, no large charities are needed, no

great offerings are needed. A leaf, a flower or a fruit or even water, is enough to please the Lord, and when the Lord is pleased, all the *Devas, Pitris* and *Bhutas* are pleased. All the rewards which the worshippers hope to derive from the worship of the *Devas* are derived by the worship of *Paramatma* and His worship is absolutely within the reach of every human being. Two conditions are stated here :

1) The giver should be pure-minded.

2) The offering should be made with devotion.

Kingdom, treasures and empires do not satisfy the Lord, when there is no purity and devotion; where these are, even a leaf or a fruit is enough to draw the grace of God. He is pleased and satisfied with such offerings when the worshipper is a true *Bhakta.* Lord Krishna did not accept the hospitality of the proud Duryodhana, but dined with the humble Vidura. The dried corn offered by Kuchela was accepted by the Lord with great pleasure, and the reward which he received is well known to all.

What is required is (1) purity of heart, and (2) true devotion. Even the humblest and the most ignorant man receives God's grace by purity and devotion. The richest and the most powerful shall have to go without it, if they are arrogant and self-indulgent. That is why one comes across some learned scholars plunged in the mire of *samsara* in spite of their Sastric learning. That is why kings and emperors have sought refuge at the feet of sages in their troubles and sorrows. The pure man alone is happy. The devotee alone is fearless.

The Lord is the King of Kings. He is the maker and unmaker of all the worlds. Love and devotion are the only things by which the Lord is pleased. If he is pleased, all the world and all the beings are pleased.

We recall to mind the wonderful episode in the *Mahabharata* when the Pandavas were in exile, sage Durvasa came with all his disciples to the hermitage of Pandavas and wanted to be fed. Draupadi had nothing in the pot except a few bits of cooked

food. She thought of the Lord and he came and tasted the few bits of cooked food, and lo, the miracle ! The sage and his disciples felt surfeited and could take no more food, even when they were requested by Pandavas to accept their hospitality. Please the Lord, and all other beings shall be pleased.

Those who worship Him with single-minded devotion are God's own children. God's mercy is on them at all times, and in all places. They receive *Atmajnana.* The Upanishads declare the same truth.

Draupadi and Vidura offered a leaf; Gajendra offered a flower; Sabari offered a fruit; Ranti Deva offered water. With their purity and devotion these great devotees attained the Lord by simple offerings.

Question : *What pleases the Lord ?*

Answer : Any simple offering given with purity and devotion pleases the Lord.

Question : *What then are the conditions to receive God's grace ?*

Answer : Purity and devotion.

The Lord teaches Arjuna to offer all he does to Him.

27. यत्करोषि यदश्नासि यज्जुहोषि ददासि यत् ।
यत्तपस्यसि कौन्तेय तत्कुरुष्व मदर्पणम् ॥ २७

Yat karoshi yad asnasi yaj juhoshi dadasi yat ।
yat tapasyasi kaunteya tat kurusva madarpanam ॥ 27

Meaning : कौन्तेय *Kaunteya :* O Arjuna ! यत् *yat :* whatever, करोषि *karoshi :* you do, यत् *yat :* whatever, अश्नासि *asnasi :* you eat, यत् *yat :* whatever, जुहोषि *juhoshi :* you offer in sacrifice, यत् *yat :* whatever, ददासि *dadasi :* you offer as gifts, यत् तपस्यसि *yat tapasyasi :* whatever you perform as austerity, तत् *tat :* that (all), मदर्पणम् *madarpanam :* as offering unto me, कुरुष्व *kurushva :* do.

Substance : Whatever you do, whatever you eat, whatever you offer in sacrifice, whatever you give as charity, whatever you perform as austerity, that (all) do as offering unto Me.

Commentary : The Lord teaches Arjuna to cultivate the basic attitude of mind which enables him to offer whatever he does, to the Lord alone. Every thing should be offered to the Lord, the food eaten, the sacrifice made, and the austerity performed. In fact all the activities of life should be offered unto the Lord, without the expectation of any personal reward. The actions and the fruits of actions should be surrendered to the Lord with a loving heart.

Yat Karoshi : This does not mean bad actions.

Yadasnasi : This does not mean prohibited food.

Man has to do some work in the world, and instead of binding himself with that, the Lord instructs that it should be surrendered to Him, in the spirit of '*Krishnarpanamastu*' or '*Brahmarpanamastu*'. By such surrender, man escapes the bondage of *karma* and also acquires God's grace. This indeed is an easy path to liberation. To the house-holders particularly this method is of great help in their spiritual advancement.

The devotee should make self-surrender to the Lord whatever he is doing.

Question : *How should man work ?*

Answer : Whatever he does, should be surrendered to the Lord.

Question : *What is the effect ?*

Answer : He is freed from the bondage of *karma*, and obtains God's grace.

The effect of surrender to the Lord is declared.

28. शुभाशुभफलैरेवं मोक्ष्यसे कर्मबन्धनैः ।
संन्यासयोगयुक्तात्मा विमुक्तो मामुपैष्यसि ॥ २८

Subhasubhaphalair evam mokshyase karmabandhanaih ।
sannyasa yoga yuktatma vimukto mam upaishyasi ॥ 28

Meaning : एवम् *evam* : in this way, संन्यासयोगयुक्तात्मा *sannyasayogayuktatma* : with steadfast mind in the yoga of renunciation, शुभाशुभफलैः *subhasubhaphalaiah* : from good and evil fruits, कर्मबन्धनैः *karmabandhanaih* : from the bonds of karma, मोक्ष्यसे *mokshyase* : you shall be freed, विमुक्तः *vimuktah* : being freed. माम् *mam* : Me, उपैष्यसि *upaishyasi* : you shall attain.

Substance : Thus you shall be liberated from the bonds of actions yielding good and evil fruits; with steadfast mind in the *yoga* of renunciation, you shall come to Me by being set free from *karma*.

Commentary : It is clear that the Lord is teaching the renunciation of the fruits of actions and not the renunciation of actions. *Sanyasa* here means renunciation of the fruit of action. Such a man who practices renunciation of the fruit of action (*Karmaphalatyaga*) is freed from all the bonds of *Karma.*

The term *Moksha* is frequently used by all people. What does it mean ? Where is the *Moksha* ? Here is the meaning for it. Freedom from bondage is *Moksha.* What is this bondage : The bondage of *karma* done by men with a sense of personal doership and desire for its fruits. To give up the fruits of *karma* to God is *Moksha.* It is *Sanyasa.* From the point of view of self-realisation, both good and evil are in the realm of the unreal. But the seeker has to relealse himself from evil first and then give up good also. Then he reaches the *Nirvikalpa* state. This is the surest way to liberation and union with the Lord.

Question *How can man free himself from the bond of karma?*

Answer : By surrendering all actions to the Lord, man is freed from *Karma* and obtains God's grace.

The Lord declares that He is the same to all.

29. समोऽहं सर्वभूतेषु न मे द्वेष्योऽस्ति न प्रियः ।
ये भजन्ति तु मां भक्त्या मयि ते तेषु चाप्यहम् ॥ २९

Samo'ham sarvabhuteshu na me dveshyo'sti na priyah ।
ye bhajanti tu mam bhaktya mayi te teshu cha'pyaham । 29

Meaning : अहम् *aham :* I, सर्वभूतेषु *sarvabhuteshu :* in all beings, समः *samah :* the same, मे *me :* to Me, द्वेष्यः *dveshyah:* hateful, न अस्ति *na asti :* is not, प्रियः *priyah :* dear, न *na* (*asti*) *:* is not, ये तु *ye tu :* those who but, माम् *mam :* Me, भक्त्या *bhaktya :* with devotion, भजन्ति *bhajanti :* worship, ते *te :* they, मयि *mayi :* in Me (are), तेषुचापि *teshu cha api :* and in them also, अहम् *aham :* I (am).

Substance : The same am I to all beings; there is none hateful or dear to Me; those verily who worship Me with devotion, they are in Me, and I am also in them.

Commentary : This declaration of the Lord that He is the same to all beings should be carefully noted by all aspirants. The Lord does not hate any being, nor is any being dear to Him. His grace is overflowing for all people. To make Him responsible for the good and evil things that come to man in the course of this life is utter nonsense. And yet even learned people are so deluded that they complain against God in moments of crisis and calamity. The Lord has nothing to do with the ups and downs, losses and gains, pleasures and pains of all beings. Each one reaps the fruits of his own thoughts and actions. One reaps what he sows. The law is universal and eternal. Let the seeker realise the full responsibility for the good and bad that comes to him. Let him never shift the blame to any one else.

Though the Lord is the same to all beings, they are not all the same to Him. Hatred and malice lead people into evil and this evil causes sorrow and misery. Some enlightened souls avoid such thoughts and feelings and culitivate an attitude of love and friendliness, and so they enjoy life better. They come nearer to God and experience bliss and blessedness.

Let no one imagine that God's grace has not come to him. God's grace, like the wind, is blowing everywhere. Intrepid

sailors spread the sails and make rapid progress on the ocean of spirituality, where as the lazy remain where they are.

The devotee is assured that the Lord is in them and they are in Him. This is due to the devotion of the aspirant. The Lord is like the fire in the cold season. The nearer one moves towards it, the warmer he feels. The farther away he is, the colder does he feel. This is the natural law. The Lord states very clearly that he lives in the hearts of his devotees who worship him with love and devotion. Such a man is the very temple of God. They are God Himself because the Lord is directly manifest in them.

Single-minded devotion leads man to the Supreme Lord, who is present in all beings and who manifests Himself in the heart of the true devotee.

Question : *How does God look upon all beings ?*

Answer : He is the same to all beings.

Question : *Why then do some people suffer and others enjoy life?*

Answer : It is the result of their own actions. Those who worship the Lord enjoy life, others suffer.

Question : *How is God to be worshipped ?*

Answer : With devotion.

Question : *Where does God manifest Himself ?*

Answer : He manifests Himself in the hearts of the true devotees. In all beings, the Lord exists as '*sat*' but to those of devotion He reveals Himself and gives them *Moksha.*

The greatness of devotion is explained.

30. अपि चेत्सुदुराचारो भजते मामनन्यभाक् ।
साधुरेव स मन्तव्यः सम्यग्व्यवसितो हि सः ॥ ३०

Api chet suduracharo bhajate mam ananyabhak ।
sadhur eva sa mantavyah samyag vyavasito hi sah । 30

Meaning : सुदुराचारः अपि *suduracharah api :* even a very wicked person, अनन्यभाक् *ananyabhak :* with devotion to non else, माम् *mam :* Me, भजते चेत् *bhajate chet :* worships, सः *sah :* he, साधुः एव *sadhuh eva :* righteous verily, मन्तव्यः *mantavyah :* should be regarded, हि *hi :* indeed, सः *sah :* he, सम्यक् *samyak :* rightly, व्यवसितः *vyavasitah :* has resolved.

Substance : Even if the most sinful person worships Me with undivided heart, he should be regarded righteous, for he has rightly resolved indeed.

Commentary : Though the most wicked of men, if he takes refuge in the Lord with faith and devotion, striving to give up his wickedness, he should be regarded as a righteous and holy person. The Lord uses the superlative term (*suduracharah*) to indicate the worst forms of sin and evil. Even such a person should be known as holy by virtue of his absolute self-surrender to the Lord. The reason is that he has come to the right decision that *Paramatma* is the only Reality and he has obtained a glimpse of this ultimate truth. He has realised the illusory nature of the world, and so he has taken final refuge in the only Reality–*Paramatma.* His decision is right and his salvation is then assured by the Lord.

He is ceaselessly contemplating the Lord and does not touch anything other than *Atma.* The evil pertaining to such a person is burnt up in the flame of knowledge. A heap of straw lying for several years can be reduced to ashes by fire. So the accumulated evil of past births is destroyed by the fire of knowledge. The darkness existing in a remote mountain-cave for thousands of years is destroyed immediately when a match is lighted. So the evil in man however ancient it might be is destroyed by the flash of knowledge. The *asadhu* becomes a *sadhu*, the demon becomes a God. What brings about this wonderful transformation ? Pure devotion and right knowledge.

Therefore, let no sinner be disheartened that the weight of sin is too much for him to bear. Let him decide aright.

Let him take refuge in the Lord, with faith and devotion. He is freed from all sin. He is then a righteous man (*sadhu*). Instead of condemning people as sinners, it is necessary to rouse the divinity in them and this is the gratest act of goodness which the realised man can do humanity.

The point to remember is that nothing good can come out of dull contemplation of one's own weaknesses, past and present. He should act positively and try to understand what is true and what is false. He should surrender himself to God, and that very moment he transcends all evil.

Whatever evil clings to man in the state of ignorance, that is cleared off by right decision, and determination.

The path of God is the right path. The path of the world (*drisya*) is the wrong path.

The word '*sadhu*' refers to the righteous man who is leading a truly spiritual life.

Question : *How can the wicked man become a sadhu ?*

Answer : By single-minded devotion to God.

Question : *What is the right decision ?*

Answer : To have faith in the Lord as the only Reality is the correct decision.

The Lord's promise that His devotee never perishes.

31. क्षिप्रं भवति धर्मात्मा शश्वच्छान्तिं निगच्छति ।
कौन्तेय प्रतिजानीहि न मे भक्तः प्रणश्यति ॥ ३१

Khsipram bhavati dharmatma sasvacchantim nigacchati ।
kaunteya pratijanihi na me bhaktah pranasyati॥ 31

Meaning : क्षिप्रम् *kshipram :* quickly, धर्मात्मा *dharmatma :* righteous man, भवति *bhavati :* becomes, शश्वत् *sasvat :* eternal, शान्तिम् *santim :* peace, निगच्छति *nigacchati :* attains, कौन्तेय *Kaunteya :* O Arjuna ! (सः *sah :* that man), मे *me :* My,

भक्तः *bhaktah :* devotee, न प्रणश्यति *na pranasyati :* is not destroyed, प्रतिजानीहि *pratijani :* know.

Substance : O Arjuna ! Soon he becomes righteous and attains eternal peace; know you for certain, My devotee will never suffer destruction.

Commentary : The effect of the right decision is declared here. The wicked man quickly becomes a righteous man ('*Dharmatma*'), and attains eternal peace.

This point should be carefully understood, because all progress in spiritual life depends on correct and firm decision. One may read all the *sastras* in the world, and yet cling desparately to the ephemeral things of the world. Such a man has not come to the right decision in spite of his learning and erudition. The decision that *Paramatma* alone is Real, and that He alone is the ultimate refuge should be reached. But doubt and darkness cover up the mind, and the truth, though repeatedly heard, does not sink into the mind and illumine the heart.

But, when the correct decision is reached, accepted and confirmed by one's own heart, he immediately becomes a righteous man, whatever his former sins might be. Not only does he become righteous, but he enjoys supreme eternal peace. The *Upanishads* declare "Unto them comes peace and to none else."

The second line of the verse is the Lord's proclamation to the world. "My devotee never perishes." This is a '*mahamantra*' for all mankind. Whenever one feels dispirited, dull and desperate, let this line be repeated, shouted at the highest pitch, so that the clouds of doubt and despair might be cleared, and the Lord becomes manifest in his own heart. How can a man suffer from thirst when the holy Ganga is flowing by ? How can a man become desperate when the loving Lord is standing by ? No. Let there be no doubt about it. The Lord throws a challenge to all doubters–"Have faith in Me, thou shall not be destroyed." Let the feeble and infirm doubters feel the warmth of this declaration. The compassionate Lord wants Arjuna to

proclaim to all mankind that His devotees shall never suffer destruction. Remembering this promise, may all aspirants move forward on the glorious path of Self-realisation.

Question : *How shall the wicked man change ?*

Answer : By having faith in the Lord. He becomes *Dharmatma* very soon.

Question : *What shall be his reward ?*

Answer : Supreme peace.

Question : *What then is the way to attain peace ?*

Answer : Undivided faith and devotion to the Lord.

Question : *What is the Lord's promise ?*

Answer : His devotees shall never perish.

The Lord declares that even the low-born reach the highest state by devotion to Him.

32. मां हि पार्थ व्यपाश्रित्य येऽपि स्युः पापयोनयः ।
स्त्रियो वैश्यास्तथा शूद्रास्तेऽपि यान्ति परां गतिम् ॥ ३२

Mam hi partha vyapasritya ye'pi syuh papayonayah ।
striyo vaiyas tatha sudraste'pi yanti param gatim ॥ 32

Meaning : पार्थ *Partha :* O Arjuna ! ये *ye :* those, पापयोनयः अपि *papayonayah api :* even of sinful birth, स्युः *syuh :* may be, ते अपि *te api :* they even, स्त्रियः *striyah :* women, वैश्याः *vaisyah :* Vaisyas, तथा *tatha :* also, शूद्राः *sudrah :* Sudras, माम् *mam :* Me, व्यपाश्रित्य *vyapasritya :* taking refuge in, परां गतिम् *param gatim :* the Supreme goal, यान्ति हि *yanti hi :* verily attain.

Substance : O Arjuna! Taking refuge in Me even those of sinful birth, as well as women, Vaisyas and Sudras also, attain the supreme goal.

Commentary : It is declared that even those of sinful birth attain the Lord by taking refuge in Him. Even they transcend *samsara* by faith and devotion to the Lord.

Moreover women and people belonging to all castes attain the Supreme goal by taking refuge in the Lord.

Verily no one is debarred from the highest realisation, provided he has decided aright and knows the Lord to be the One Reality. How hopeful and inspiring! No one need feel disheartened on account of the low birth, if he has developed true devotion to the Lord. Caste and creed is of no concern at all for any one to attain *Brahmajnana.* This open secret is free for all. Women also are qualified for *Brahma Vidya.* The universality of Gita is thus proclaimed to the whole world. The all-inclusive and all-embracing character of the Gita distinguishes it from other sectarian scriptures which deny the right of liberation to certain section of people on account of race, or creed or religion. Merit is the only consideration. All other artificial barriers between man and man are shattered once for all by the teaching of the Gita.

Purity of mind is the real test of *jnana.* When the mirror is pure, one can see the reflection clearly. The mirror makes no distinction between the rich and poor, or high and low. Such is *Brahmajnana,* the birth-right of every being in the universe.

Among women Sabari and the milk-maids of Brindavanam, and a host of women-saints have attained the Supreme. Among Vysyas Samadhi and others may be mentioned. The story of Samadhi is found in Markandeya Purana.

Question : *What is the state of Paramatma ?*

Answer : It is the Supreme state. There is nothing higher than that.

Question : *Who can attain it.*

Answer : Those who take refuge in the Lord attain it.

Question : *Is any one prohibited from this knowledge ?*

Answer : No. Caste, creed, sex, low-birth these do not stand in the way of a person realising the Supreme.

The unreal and sorrowful nature of the world and the need for devotion to the Lord are declared.

33. किं पुनर्ब्राह्मणाः पुण्या भक्ता राजर्षयस्तथा ।
अनित्यमसुखं लोकमिमं प्राप्य भजस्व माम् ॥ ३३

Kim punar brahmanah punya bhakta rajarshayas tatha ।
anityam asukham lokam imam prapya bhajasva mam ॥ 33

Meaning : पुण्याः *punyah :* holy, ब्राह्मणाः *brahmanah :* Brahmins, तथा *tatha :* also, भक्ताः *bhaktah :* devoted, राजर्षयः *rajarshayah :* royal saints, किम् पुनः *kim punah :* how much more, अनित्यम् *anityam :* impermanent, असुखम् *asukham :* unhappy, इमम् लोकं *imam lokam :* this world, प्राप्य *prapya :* having entered, माम् *mam :* Me, भजस्व *bhajasva :* worship.

Substance : How much more easily then the holy Brahmins and the royal saints attain the goal ; having entered this world impermanent and unhappy, worship Me.

Commentary : If people of sinful birth, as well as women and *sudras* are competent to attain *Brahmajnana,* how much more easy it should be for the holy Brahmins and royal saints ? The attributes '*punyah*' and '*bhaktah*' are used to emphaise the need for the possession of these qualities which alone entitle a man to reach the highest state. Mere birth cannot take any man anywhere. It is not a passport to God-realisation. Purity and devotion are absolutely essential.

Rajarshayah : Self-control is the attribute of a saint (*Rishi*). Kings who attained self-mastery are Rajarshis. Entangled in the day to day complications of earthly rule, if the Kings could acquire purity and perfection, will it not be possible for humble house-holders who have lesser burdens and greater freedom to attain the supreme goal ?

Anityam asukham lokam : This world or this birth or the body is impermanent and unhappy. Unless a man is blind or demented, he would naturally realise by observation and experience that the Lord's description of the world is perfectly true. The impermanent nature of the world is an every day fact, and all that is matter shall disintegrate, sooner or later. The earthen pot shall go back to the earth. The bodies made up of the five elements shall go back to the elements. Nothing can stop it. What then ? The wise man should hold on to the Lord. "Worship Me" is the Lord's command. Since death is stalking in the world the immediate need for the worship of the Lord is explained. Before the body falls, the Lord should be realised. This is the most urgent aim. All other things come and go according to one's *karma* (*Prarabdha*). Worship of the Lord is the very essence of life.

The world is not only momentary but it is full of misery, devoid of happiness (*asukham*).

There is no real joy in little earthly things, Joy is only in the infinite *Atma*. Man discovers this truth after long experience. The pain that poisons all earthly enjoyments is slowly and gradually understood by discrimination, observation and experience. Then man turns away from the world and takes refuge in the Lord.

'Worship Me' is the Lord's command. The world is impermanent and painful. Worship of the Lord who is real and who is the very ocean of bliss is the only way to rise above the painful dream of the world. The unreal is rejected by taking refuge is the Real, and the unhappy should be given up by discovering that which is truly the embodiment of joy (i. e.) the Lord. Therefore let no man be tempted by the superficial attractions of the shadowy world, but let him seek for the source of all that is Truth, Beauty, and Peace, (*Satyam, Sivam, Sundaram*).

Question : *What qualities are needed for God-realisation ?*

Answer : Purity and devotion.

Question : *What is the nature of the world ?*

Answer : It is unreal and unhappy.

Question : *What is the way to overcome samsara ?*

Answer : Devotion to the Lord.

The Lord points the way to reach Him.

34. मन्मना भव मद्भक्तो मद्याजी मां नमस्कुरु ।
मामेवैष्यसि युक्त्वैवमात्मानं मत्परायणः ॥ ३४

Manmana bhava madbhakto madyaji mam namaskuru ।
mamevaishyasi yuktvai'vamatmanam matparayanah ॥ 34

Meaning : मन्मनाः *manmanah :* mind filled with Me, मद्भक्तः *madbhaktah :* My devotee, (भव *bhava :* be you), मद्याजी *madyaji :* My sacrificer, भव *bhava :* be you, माम् *mam :* to Me, नमस्कुरु *namaskuru :* bow down, एवम् *evam :* thus, आत्मानम् *atmanam :* the Self, युक्त्वा *yuktva :* being united, मत्परायणः *matparayanah :* taking Me as the Supreme goal, मामेव *mam eva :* to Me only, एष्यसि *eshyasi :* you shall come.

Substance : On Me fix your mind, be My devotee, sacrifice to Me, bow down to me, harmonised thus in the Self, you shall come to Me, having Me as the supreme goal.

Commentary : The way to reach *Paramatma* is clearly stated here. The seeker should converge all his activities towards that one Supreme Goal. He should think of the Lord, be devoted to Him, offer sacrifice to Him, and worship Him with all faith and humility. In word, thought and deed, he should worship the Lord. Generally, the mind wanders in the realm of the sensuous. It should be withdrawn from the world and centred in *Atma*. This is possible by contemplating the glorious attributes of the Self. Such contemplation developes love and adoration for the Lord. Thus thinking constantly of the blissful and ever-glorious Self, man unites himself with the Supreme. He worships Him with all devotion and humility.

The mind becomes that which it constantly contemplates. This is the law. Having for long contemplated worldly objects, the mind has become the world; if the mind is trained to contemplate *Paramatma*, it becomes that according to the same law; that is, the union of the individual self with the universal Self. This state is realised by constant contemplation and meditation on the Self, the Lord.

Let the seekers put themselves these questions — On what is their mind resting? Is it on the world or on *Paramatma*? To what are the devoted? Is it to the world or to the Lord? What do they worship? Is it the world of name and form or *Paramatma*? Where do they live and have their being? Is it in the world of the senses or in the seat of *Atma*? The Lord points the way, the only way to peace and bliss.

Question : *What is the way to reach the Lord?*

Answer : Fill the mind with Him, be devoted to Him, sacrifice unto Him, prostrate before Him. In this way, continuously live and have your being in the Lord.

इति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे
श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे राजविद्याराजगुह्ययोगो नाम
नवमोऽध्यायः ॥

Iti Srimad Bhagavadgitasupanishatsu brahmavidyayam yogasastre Sri Krishnarjuna samvade Rajavidya Rajaguhya Yogo nama navamo'dhyayah.

Thus, in the Upanishads of the glorious Bhagavad Gita, the Science of the Eternal, the Scripture of Yoga, and the dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna ends The Ninth Discourse entitled - Rajavidya Raja Guhya Yoga

(The *Yoga* of Royal Knowledge and Royal Secret.)

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श्री भगवद्गीता

SRI BHAGAVAD GITA

अथ दशमोऽध्यायः

Atha Dasamodhyayah

TENTH DISCOURSE

विभूतियोगः

VIBHUTI YOGA

THE YOGA OF DIVINE GLORIES

I. The title of the Discourse :

'Vibhuti' means glory, sovereign power. This entire Universe is the manifested form of the Lord. So all this is His glory, the extension of His wonderful power, the play of His Divine Intelligence. As this Discourse deals with the manifold forms of the Supreme Lord, it is entitled 'Vibhuti Yogah.'

II. Important Points of the Discourse :

1) The sovereign yogic powers of the Lord, and the effect of knowing them. (1–7)

2) The power and fruit of Bhakti Yoga (8–11)

3) Arjuna's appeal to the Lord to describe His miraculous power and manifestation. (12–15)

4) The Lord speaks of His infinite glories. (19–42)

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III. How this Discourse is connected with the previous one :

In the 7th, 8th and 9th Discourses the Lord has briefly referred to His miraculous glories. In order to enable His devotees to worship Him easily, He declares His Sovereignity in various ways in this Discourse. Such knowledge of Divine manifestations develops the devotee's universal understanding of the Lord's presence everywhere. His devotion is strengthened and he will then be able to carry out the Lord's command at the end of the previous Discourse-'*manmana bhava*···'. Thus the understanding of *Paramatma* is realised by the contemplation of His Divine Glory, as it is manifesting in the Universe in various shapes and forms.

श्री भगवानुवाच

1. भूय एव महाबाहो शृणु मे परमं वचः ।
यत्तेऽहं प्रीयमाणाय वक्ष्यामि हितकाम्यया ॥ १

Sri Bhagavan uvacha

Bhuya eva mahabaho srinu me paramam vachah ।
yat te'ham priyamanaya vakshyami hitakamyaya ॥ 1

श्री भगवानुवाच – *Sri Bhagavan Uvacha* : The blessed Lord said.

Meaning : महाबाहो *mahabaho* : O mighty–armed Arjuna ! प्रीयमाणाय *priyamanaya* : delighting in My words, ते *te* : to you, हितकाम्यया *hitakamyaya* : wishing you welfare, भूय एव *bhuyah eva* : verily again, यत् *yat* : that, परमम् *paramam* : highest, वचः *vachah* : words, अहम् *aham* : I, वक्ष्यामि *vakshyami* : will declare, मे *me* : My, शृणु *srunu* : hear.

Substance : The blessed Lord said–O mighty–armed Arjuna! Again listen to my supreme words which, as you find delight in My words, I will declare unto you, wishing your welfare.

Commentary : The Lord was pleased to find that Arjuna, like a true disciple, was diligently listening to His words, most delighted with the teaching of the Divine Master. So the Lord proceeds to declare more and more of his divine power even before he asks for it. Such would be the love of the Master of a true disciple. As the Master finds the disciple in a receptive mood, full of faith and diligence, he reveals more of the Royal Secret out of the fulness of His heart. That is why the Lord says "delighting in my words" ('Priyamanaya'), referring to Arjuna's absorption in His teaching. Arjuna's doubt and grief were disappearing fast as the Lord continued to speak. The Lord knew it. So he speaks with a mightier accent, and reveals more of His Divine *Yoga*. Again (Bhuyah) the Lord repeats and emphasises His universality and the hearer understands it, thinks of it and meditates on it. Repeated hearing of the Truth, constant thinking of it, and continuous meditation on it—this is the only way to absorb the Truth and make it one's own. Vivekananda says: "This *Atman* is first to be heard of. Hear day and night that you are that Soul. Repeat it to yourself day and night till it enters into your very veins, till it tingles in every drop of blood, till it is in your flesh and bone." Such should be the immovable firmness of conviction in the Divine Truth. So the Lord repeats, expounds, declares and proclaims His Divine Glory.

The Lord wishes to do good to His disciple. What is the greatest good that man can obtain ? Not certainly wealth and enjoyments, but Knowledge of *Paramatma*, by which man realises his blissful and blessed Self.

Paramam vachah : The Lord's teaching is wonderful for it removes the veil of ignorance, dispells all darkness from the human heart. Let mankind hear the Lord's Supreme word.

Question : *How is the Lord's word ?*

Answer : It is Supreme.

Question : *Why does the Lord repeat what He has already said?*

Answer : To do good to Arjuna who was delighting in the Lord's teaching.

Question : *What is the greatest good ?*

Answer : Knowledge of the Supreme.

The Lord proclaims His power–'Yogamaya' in the five verses.

2. न मे विदुः सुरगणाः प्रभवं न महर्षयः ।
अहमादिर्हि देवानां महर्षीणां च सर्वशः ॥ २

Na me viduh suraganah prabhavam na maharshayah ।
aham adirhi devanam maharshinam cha sarvasah ॥ 2

Meaning : मे *me* : my, प्रभवम् *prabhavam* : origin (the secret of His incarnation, power), सुरगणाः *suraganah* : hosts of Devas, न विदुः *na viduh* : do not know, महर्षयः *maharshayah* : the great sages, न विदुः *na (viduh)* : do not know, अहम् *aham* : I, देवानाम् *devanam* : of the Devas, महर्षीणांच *maharshinam cha* : and of the great sages, सर्वशः *sarvah* : in every way, आदिः हि *adi hi* : am the cause, orgin indeed.

Substance : Neither the hosts of *Devas* nor the great sages know my origin; I am in every way the cause and source of all *Devas* and *Rishis* indeed.

Commentary : The Lord is the Ancient Purusha, the ultimate cause and source of all the worlds and beings. From Him proceed all the *Devas* and *Maharshis.* Even they are not able to understand the infinite mystery of the Lord. Endowed with wisdom, if these great souls fail to know the Lord fully, what to speak of other mortals? No one can measure the infinitude of the Lord with his finite mind. So, what man can aspire for, is simply to surrender to Him, and obtain His grace, by which he merges in and becomes one with him.

Question : *What is the power of Paramatma* ?

Answer : He is the cause and origin of all the *Devas* and Maharshis, and all beings.

Question : *What is man's duty* ?

Answer : He should worship the Lord and merge in Him.

He who knows the Lord as the final cause, and worships Him is freed from sin.

3. यो मामजमनादिं च वेत्ति लोकमहेश्वरम् ।
असंमूढः स मर्त्येषु सर्वपापैः प्रमुच्यते ॥ ३

Yo mam ajam anadim cha vetti lokamahesvaram ।
asammudhah sa martyeshu sarvapapaih pramuchyate ॥ 3

Meaning : यः *yah* : who, माम् *mam* : Me, अजम् *ajam* : the unborn, birthless, अनादिं च *anadim cha* : and without beginning, लोकमहेश्वरम् *lokamahesvaram* : the Lord of all the worlds, वेत्ति *vetti* : knows, सः *sah* : he, मर्त्येषु *martyeshu* : among men, असंमूढः *asammudhah* : without delusion, सर्वपापैः *sarvapapaih* : from all sins, प्रमुच्यते *pramuchyate* : is freed.

Substance : Who knows Me as the birthless, without a beginning, the Lord of all the worlds, he among mortals is freed from all sins.

Commentary : Among living beings of the world, man is the highest incarnation and among mortals he who knows the Lord as unborn and beginningless is the greatest. *Paramatma* is unborn (ajah) and He has no beginning (anadi). All other beings have a beginning and end. They are born in time and die in time. Knowledge of *Paramatma* alone confers immortality on man. He becomes free from delusion. This indeed is the highest reward which man can get by his devotion to the Lord. All other worldly benefits are impermanent and illusory. They lead to sorrow and death. So it is the primary duty of all seekers to hold on to the Lord and transcend delusion with His grace. When delusion is gone, man is at once freed from all sin. When man becomes sinless he becomes one with *Paramatma.* Though a man is burdened with all the sins in the world, yet, like fire burning up a vast forest, God's grace destroys the entire sin. So, devotion to the Lord is what is most essential. And his devotion is cultivated, strengthened and developed by understanding the infinite Glory of the Lord. As man thinks

constantly of the inscrutable power of the Lord, his adoration increases and his worship becomes truer, deeper and broader.

Question : *Who is the best of men ?*

Answer : He who knows the Lord to be unborn, without a beginning, the ruler of the world, is the best of men.

Question : *What is the effect ?*

Answer : He is freed from all delusion and sin.

Question : *How then to become the best of men ?*

Answer : To know the nature of the Lord in essence.

Question : *What is the way to be free from sin ?*

Answer : To know the Lord as unborn and eternal is the way (By this devotion is cultivated , by devotion *Dhyana* and by *Dhyana* the actual perception of God, and by that vision *purity* from all sin, and from that liberation is attained).

4. बुद्धिर्ज्ञानमसंमोहः क्षमा सत्यं दमः शमः ।
सुखं दुःखं भवोऽभावो भयं चाभयमेव च ॥ ४

5. अहिंसा समता तुष्टिस्तपो दानं यशोऽयशः ।
भवन्ति भावा भूतानां मत्त एव पृथग्विधाः ॥ ५

Buddhir jnanam asammohah
kshama satyam damah samah ।
sukham duhkham bhavo'bhavo
bhayam cha'bhayam eva cha । 4

Ahimsa samata tustis tapo danam yaso'yasah ।
bhavanti bhava bhutanam matta eva prithagvidhah ॥ 5

Meaning : बुद्धिः *buddhih* : reason (capacity to understand subtle things), ज्ञानम् *jnanam* : knowledge, असंमोहः *asammohah* : freedom from delusion, क्षमा *kshama* : forbearance, सत्यम् *satyam* : truthfulness, दमः *damah* : control of external organs,

शमः *samah* : control of internal organs, सुखम् *sukham* : happiness, दुःखम् *duhkham* : suffering and sorrow, भवः *bhavah* : birth or existence, अभावः *abhavah* : non-existence, भयम् च *bhayam cha* : fear, and, अभयम् एव च *abhayam eva cha* : and also fearlessness अहिंसा *ahimsa* : non-injury, समता *samata* : equal-mindedness, तुष्टिः *tushtih* : contentment, तपः *tapah* : austerity, दानम् *danam*: charity, यशः *yasah*: fame, अयशः *ayasah*: ill-fame, भूतानाम् *bhutanam* : of beeings, पृथग्विधाः *prithagvidhah* : of different kinds, भावाः *bhavah* : (these) qualities, मत्तः एव *mattah eva* : from Me alone, भवन्ति *bhavanti* : arise.

Substance : Reason, knowledge, non-delusion, forgiveness, truthfulness, self-restraint of external and internal organs, calmness, pleasure, pain, existence, non-existence, fear, fearlessness, non-injury, equanimity, contentment, austerity, charity, fame, ill-fame — these different qualities of beings arise from Me alone.

Commentary : Sixteen good qualities and four bad qualities are mentioned in these two verses. All these qualities proceed from the Lord Himself. What does this mean ? It does not mean that God gives good qualities to some people and bad qualities to some others. He has already declared "There is no one hateful or dear to Me." This being so, the qualities exhibited by different people are the result of their own thoughts and actions. Men who contemplate the righteous become good, possessing all divine qualities and others who think and act in the opposite direction become bad, possessing undivine qualities. It is by the Lord's power that these qualities, good and bad come to man, though the Lord is just a witness only and is not affected by them. The Lord does not cause *karma*. He is not the doer of *karma*, ('*karmakarta*'). He is the dispenser of the fruits of action-(*karmaphalapradata*). It is in this sense that we have to understand the Lord's declaration.

Moreover the mind is in itself insentient, and it is animated by the life-force of the Lord. As the iron-needle moves by the nearness of the magnet, the presence of *Atma* makes the mind active according to its own nature. Therefore the Lord here says that from Him arise all the different qualities of mortals. Indeed *Atma* (the Lord) does not cause them nor prompt them. The Sun has nothing to do with the actions of mortals in the world, nor has the theatre-light anything to do with the actions performed on the stage.

6. महर्षयः सप्त पूर्वे चत्वारो मनवस्तथा ।
मद्भावा मानसा जाता येषां लोक इमाः प्रजाः ॥ ६

Maharshayah sapta purve chatvaro manavastatha ।
madbhava manasa jata yesham loka imah prajah ॥ 6

Meaning : लोके *loke :* in the world, इमाः प्रजाः *imah prajah:* these beings, येषाम् *yesham :* whose progeny, पूर्वे *purve :* ancient, महर्षयः *maharshayah :* the great sages, सप्त *sapta :* seven, तथा *tatha :* thus, चत्वारः *chatvarah :* the four (Sanaka and other Devarshis), मनवः *manavah :* Manus (fourteen), मद्भावाः *madbhavah:* possessed of powers like Me(devoted to Me and meditating on me), मानसा जाताः *manasajatah :* are born from My mind.

Substance : The seven great *Rishis*, the ancient four *Devarshis*, the fourteen Manus, were born of My nature from My mind; and from them have come forth all these beings in the world.

Commentary : The Lord declares that the Seven great *Rishis*, the four ancient *Devarshis*, the fourteen Manus, were all born of the divine *samkalpa*, partaking of His nature. These indeed are the original ancestors and the creators of this world. They are all devotees of the Lord, possessing perfect *Atmajnana*

The inscrutable power of the Lord is proclaimed here, for, by a wish of His mind, came forth these beings of the highest order. And from them originated all the beings of the

world. The mysterious power of the Lord should inspire the deepest reverence in the heart of every man. Man's duty is to bow down before God and remember Him forever and ever.

The great sages, the *Devarshis* and the *Manus* are of the nature of the Lord. They are the highest devotees and perfected beings, (i. e.) they are *Jnanis* of the highest order, who possess direct knowledge of Brahman. They know the highest Truth. All the beings of the world, are the progeny of these great souls. They partake of the nature of God, and all others partake of the nature of these Divine manifestations. Should not people then be full of devotion and wisdom ? Is it not a denial of one's heritage and birthright to entangle himself in the bonds of the objective world and get lost in the wilderness of *Samsara* ? People remember their sage-ancestors when they perform their morning and evening ablutions (*Sandhyavandanam*). It is a reminder to all that like their ancestors they should rise to the plane of the spirit. Ancestral property, wealth, power and possessions, do not save men from destruction if they forget the Divinity in them and sink in the mire of ignorance and delusion. It is the ancient wisdom alone that could save man from sorrow and death.

Let people be filled with this great idea that they have for their ancestors the great sages, *Devarshis* and *Manus*. Let them share the devotion and wisdom of their Divine fore-fathers. No one should think that he is low-born and weak. The blood of the Divine fore-fathers is flowing in everybody's, veins, irrespective of his caste and faith. So let one demand his birthright of devotion and knowledge. It is not the personal possession of any one. All beings have right over that Divine knowledge. The outcastes as well as people of the highest rank and position, possess the same right for wisdom and perfection. The Lord has proclaimed the Divine birth-right of all men. So if one should be asked to declare his ancestry, let him say boldly that he is the child of the great *Rishis* and *Manus*. If anybody thinks he is low-born, he degenerates into a vile man. If he thinks that he is pure and perfect, he does become the real child of the ancient Masters. Therefore, may all

beings remember their holy fore-fathers every day, and by acquiring their great qualities, break the shackles of bondag and enjoy perfect peace and joy.

Among the above-mentioned, the *Devarshis* (Sanak Sanandana, Sanatkumara, Sanatsujata) taught the path of th withdrawal from worldly life (*Nivrithimarga*). The fourteen *Manus* taught the path of *Dharma*, righteous conduct of lif (*Pravritimarga*). The first belong to the line of the *Gurus* and the second to the line of the ancestors. All these ar brought forth from the Supreme Being, by a wish (*samkalpa* of His mind. So ultimately all are the children of the Lor and He is the father of all. Since Sanaka and others ar born-celibates, to say that people are born of them implie that they are their disciples (*Sishyas*), the children of thei wisdom.

Question : *Who are the ancestors of the human race ?*

Answer : The seven Rishis, the Four Devarshis, and th fourteen Manus.

Question : *What is their nature ?*

Answer : They partake of the nature of the Lord.

Question : *How were they brought forth ?*

Answer : By a wish of the Lord.

The excellence of Vibhuti Yoga is stated.

7. एतां विभूतिं योगं च मम यो वेत्ति तत्त्वतः ।
सोऽविकम्पेन योगेन युज्यते नात्र संशयः ॥ ७

Etam vibhutim yogam cha mama yo vetti tattvatah ।
so'vikampena yogena yujyate na'tra samsayah । 7

Meaning : मम *mama :* My, एताम् *etam :* these, विभूति *vibhutim :* manifold manifestations, योगं च *yogam cha :* ar yogic power, तत्त्वतः *tattvatah :* in essence, यः *yah :* wh वेत्ति *vetti :* knows, सः *sah :* he, अविकम्पेन *avikampena :* wi

unshakable, योगेन *yogena :* Yoga, युज्यते *yujyate :* united with Me, अत्र *atra :* in this, न संशयः *na samsayah :* there is no doubt.

Substance : Who knows in essence this sovereignity and *yoga* of mine, he, harmonised with unfaltering *yoga*, unites with me. In this there is no doubt.

Commentary : To know the wonderful manifestation of the Lord's creative power in essence, (i. e.) to understand that the whole universe has issued forth from Him, is the surest way to be firmly fixed in Him with unswerving devotion. The Lord is the only Reality. All the worlds and beings have come forth from Him. To realise this Truth is to know Him in essence. The faith of such a devotee is unshaken, and so he is fully absorbed in the contemplation of the Lord. His faith is immovable because he has traced the origin of everything to the Lord. So whatever he sees, he discovers it as the Lord. Both internally and externally he sees the Lord and nothing else. The Lord assures that he is united with Him undoubtedly.

Question : *Who attains unfaltering union with the Lord ?*

Answer : He who truly understands the sovereign power and *yoga* of the Lord attains Him beyond all doubt.

The devotee who understands the Lord's sovereignity worships Him with pure devotion.

8. अहं सर्वस्य प्रभवो मत्तः सर्वं प्रवर्तते ।
इति मत्वा भजन्ते मां बुधा भावसमन्विताः ॥ ८

Aham sarvasya prabhavo mattah sarvam pravartate ।
iti mattva bhajante mam budha bhavasamanvitah ॥ 8

Meaning : अहम् *aham :* I, सर्वस्य *sarvasya :* of all, प्रभवः *prabhavah :* the origin, मत्तः *mattah :* from Me, सर्वम् *sarvam :* everything, प्रवर्तते *pravartate :* evolves, इति *iti :* thus, मत्वा *matva :* knowing, बुधाः *budhah :* the wise, भावसमन्विताः

bhavasamanvitah : endowed with deep devotion, माम् *mam* : Me, भजन्ते *bhajante* : worship.

Substance : I am the source of all; from Me everything evolves; thus understanding, the wise worship Me with pure devotion.

Commentary : There are many who repeat God's name, serve Him, and meditate on Him. But very few are capable of pure devotion born of true realisation that He is the source of all things. Pure devotion is therefore the result of real understanding of the creative power of the Lord and His wonderful manifestation. Without understanding how the Lord is present in the universe, it is difficult to cultivate true faith, and without faith pure devotion is not possible. When man knows that the Lord is the final cause of everything, and that there is nothing else but He in all things, he spontaneously offers worship to Him. Such an act of devotion and surrender will be deep-felt, sincere and true. The devotee's surrender is deep, firm, unalterable and unconditional, for the very reason that he knows the real presence of the Lord in everything and all that takes place in the universe.

This thought ('*bhava*') of the devotee is like the shell in the cannon. Mere powder without the shell can only produce smoke and fire, but the target cannot be shattered. Similarly, unless the devotee combines the thought ('*bhava*') with the *Japa* or meditation or worship, he cannot reach the goal. This point should be carefully noted. Though many people practice *Japa* and *Dhyana*, some are not able to make any progress towards the goal, because they are lacking in '*bhava*'. To experience '*bhava*', pure devotion is essential; for pure devotion there should be true understanding of the Lord and His wonderful manifestation. All these ideas are revealed in this verse.

Question : *Who is the source of all this Universe, and how does the latter work ?*

Answer : *Paramatma* is the source, and by His power, it works.

Question : *How should a man worship the Lord ?*

Answer : With faith and devotion.

Question : *How can one acquire these qualities ?*

Answer : By understanding the true nature of the Lord, and His miraculous power and yoga, man acquires true faith and devotion.

The Lord describes that the devotees spend their life thinking of Him.

9. मच्चित्ता मद्गतप्राणा बोधयन्तः परस्परम् ।
कथयन्तश्च मां नित्यं तुष्यन्ति च रमन्ति च ॥ ९

Macchitta madgataprana bodhayantah parasparam ।
kathayantascha mam nityam tushyanti cha ramanti cha ॥ 9

Meaning : (ते *te* : the devotees), मच्चित्ताः *mat chittah* : with minds wholly absorbed in Me, मद्गतप्राणाः *madgatapranah* : with their life absorbed in Me, माम् *mam* : Me, परस्परम् *parasparam* : mutually, बोधयन्तः *bodhyantah* : enlightening, कथयन्तश्च *kathayantah cha* : and specking of (Me), नित्यम् *nityam* : always, तुष्यन्ति च *tushyanti cha* : are also satisfied, रमन्ति च *ramanti cha* : and are delighted.

Substance : With their minds wholly absorbed in Me, their life absorbed in Me, enlightening one another and always speaking of Me, they are satisfied and delighted.

Commentary : The life of the true devotee is beautifully described in this verse. The life and mental functions of the ignorant are wholly devoted to the world, and they live and die entangled in the meshes of *samsara*. But the real devotee consecrates his body, mind and life to the Lord. His mind thinks of the Lord; his limbs do the work of the Lord; his eyes see the Lord; his reason understands the presence of the Lord everywhere. His whole life is thus absorbed in the Lord. His whole life is a continued worship. When the devotees meet

together, they talk only of God, His power and *Yoga*. God's glory is infinite. Everywhere, in every thing, God's power is manifesting itself. So the devotee goes on thinking and speaking of God's Glory. Such holy company is the highest spiritual education that man can get. All doubts are cleared by mutual enlightenment. There is a powerful current, spiritual thought and emotion, circulating among them. The very air they breathe is full of knowledge and bliss.

Do we not see how wordly people talk of worldly matters endlessly? That is their *samskara*. If any one mentions the name of God in such a company he is ridiculed and condemned. The true aspirant should not mix in such company.

The devotee is like a ripe fruit full of sweet juice. Sweet juice comes out of it always. The devotee is again like a full-blown flower. Sweet fragrance envelopes the whole flower. So also, the whole life and thought of the devotee is blessed with divine contemplation and action.

A group of devotees thinking of God and His ways and exchanging intimate thoughts and experiences, is verily a Heaven on earth. They receive knowledge from one another, derive inspiration and encouragement, test and confirm their views, attitudes and angles of vision. Such mutual enlightenment increases one's faith in God, and draws him nearer the Truth.

The devotees feel satisfied and delighted. The contemplation of the Divine is an end in itself. and joy derived from it is pure and perfect. When a person begins to feel this joy which is unlike any other sensual pleasure, he finds no attraction for any thing else. He sings the name of the Lord in ecstatic joy, he laughs, he speaks out of the fullness of joy, and gets himself lost in divine intoxication. For him the whole world is transfigured and deified. He sees the Lord everywhere and he sees nothing other than the Lord anywhere.

The devotee's life is dedicated and consecrated to the Lord. His one and only aim is to know the Lord and be with Him. He is ready to sacrifice his life for realising his aim.

Such resolute spirit is necessary for God-realisation. Life is nothing if God is not realised. We find great idealists giving up every thing for attaining their ideal. So also the believers in God are ready to give up their life in their effort to reach Him. Lukewarm-faith does not lead to the goal quickly. The sacrifice should be complete and unconditional. Then the Lord is pleased, and immortality is attained. That is why it is said–"*tyagenaike amritatvamanasuh.*"–by sacrifice alone, immortality is obtained. Great souls surrender their all to the Lord.

This verse gives a vivid picture of the daily life and work of the devotee dedicated to the realisation of the Supreme.

Question : *How does the true devotee live?*

Answer : (1) His mind, senses and life are fixed in the Lord.

(2) The devotees enlighten one another in mutual company.

(3) They are thus satisfied and delighted.

Question : *In what does the devotee find pleasure and delight?*

Answer : In talking of God, and being absorbed in Him.

Question : *What should the true devotees talk of?*

Answer : They should talk of God alone and mutually enlighten one another.

Question : *In what should the mind be fixed?*

Answer : In the contemplation of *Paramatma.*

In two verses, the Lord declares that He confers Atma-Jnana on such devotees.

10. तेषां सततयुक्तानां भजतां प्रीतिपूर्वकम् ।
ददामि बुद्धियोगं तं येन मामुपयान्ति ते ॥ १०

Tesham satatayuktanam bhajatam pritipurvakam ।
dadami buddhiyogam tam yena mam upayanti te ॥ 10

Meaning : सततयुक्तानाम् *satatayuktanam* : steadfast in their devotion to me, प्रीतिपूर्वकम् *pritipurvakam* : with love, भजताम् *bhajatam* : worshipping Me, तेषाम् *tesham* : to them, येन *yena* : by which, ते *te* : they, माम् *mam* : to me, उपयान्ति *upayanti* : come, reach, तम् *tam* : that, बुद्धियोगम् *buddhiyogam* : the yoga of knowledge, ददामि *dadami* : I give.

Substance : To these ever steadfast in worshipping Me with love, I give the *yoga* of discrimination by which they come to Me.

Commentary : This is one of the key verses in the Gita, in which the link between *bhakti* and *jnana*, devotion and knowledge, is clearly stated. *Bhakti*, *Jnana*—that is the natural order of evolution in Self-realisation. The Lord declares that to those who are ever devoted to Him in love, He gives '*buddhi yoga*'-the yoga of discrimination and wisdom by which they come unto Him.

Brahmajnana is the gift of the Lord. The realisation of the *Jiva* that Brahman alone is and that he is no other than Brahman, is *Brahmajnana*. This knowledge is in the hands of God, and it can be obtained by means of loving and faithful worship. When the Lord is pleased with His devotee, He bestows *Brahmajnana* which unites the devotee and the Lord forever and ever. So *Bhakti* is the first step in spiritual evolution for all seekers. When we come across rare men who are born with *Brahmajnana*, it should be understood that they have spent many many lives in pure and loving devotion to the Lord.

Here two great qualities of the devotee are mentioned (1) steadfastness in devotion (2) worshipping with love.

(1) Continuous memory of the Lord is essential. How can the devotee have continuous memory of the Lord? This Discourse shows the way. The manifold manifestations of the Lord are vividly presented to fill the imagination of the devotee. Wherever he turns, the Lord is there in one form or

other. If one recalls to his mind the verses 7 to 11 in the Seventh Discourse, and verses 16 to 19 in the Ninth Discourse, and the whole of the *Vibhuti yoga*, he understands the universal manifestation of the Lord everywhere. So the devotee should recognise the Lord's presence everywhere and thus the devotion becomes continuous in course of time.

(2) Loving worship of the Lord is another attribute of the true devotee. Is not the Lord the friend of all beings? Though he is the sovereign of all the worlds He is at the same time a friend of all. He declares Himself to be a friend again and again. Does He not say to Arjuna 'you are dear to Me'? What then should be man's love and affection for the Lord? Such love is needed, and since God's love is infinite, no one should feel that His grace has not descended on him. Knowing full well from experience and observation that the foolish little things to which one is desperately clinging are vanishing into nothing, let the seeker have love for the Lord who is the only saviour from all the sorrows and miseries of life.

Buddhiyogam : What is Buddhiyoga? It is reason (*vichara*), the path of uncompromising discrimination between the Real and the unreal, between *Atma* and *Anatma*. Such analytical reasoning ultimately leads the seeker to the tremendous conclusion that his limited self manifesting as 'I' is nothing else but the Supreme Brahman. The 'I' dissolves in Brahman, even as a waterdrop merges in the ocean. Such discriminative reason is the gift of God. Reason (*vichara*) leads man step by step to the ultimate Reality. He who is firmly established in this *Yoga* holds on only to the essence of things (*asti*, *bhati*, *priva*) and does not recognise name and form (*nama*, *rupa*).

Several doubts crop up in the mind of the devotee in the course of his daily worship. "When shall I get true knowledge of *Atma* which is said to be within the five sheaths (*panchakosa*)? I am only worshipping the external image, a picture or idol. Is this God? God is said to be Sachidananda. Of what use is it to offer fruits and flowers at the altar of a mute earthen or metal image? When shall my worship bear fruit in the reali-

sation of God ? When shall the mind turn within and see the Lord in essence in my heart ?" Such questions arise in the mind of all worshippers. The answer is given in this verse. The Lord says, "O mortal being ! continue your worship of Me in the image or idol which pleases you most. Think of My form, beautiful and perfect, love Me as the repositary of all noble qualities, as the Lord of the world. Let your mind be saturated with My thoughts and feelings. Give up all foolish thoughts of 'I' and 'mine' which bind you to the body and the world. Be devoted to Me. Then I will bestow on you the light of knowledge which will lead you directly to *BrahmaJnana.* Your spiritual quest ends there." So says the Lord to all sincere and eager devotees.

Thus *Bhakti* evolves into *Jnana.* If *Bhakti* is the flower, *jana* is the fruit.

God with form (*Sakara*) is also God without form (*Nirakara*). God with attributes (*Saguna*) is also God without attributes (*Nirguna*). The transition from the *Sakara* to the *Nirakara* takes place spontaneously by the will of the Lord. The Lord silences all foolish talk about the superiority of *Bhakti* or *Jnana.* "My *Bhakti* is superior to your *jnana*—or my *Jnana* is superior to your *Bhakti.*"—Such half–digested nonsense should be given up once for all. The *Bhakta* turns automatically into a *Jnani* and the *Jnani* takes to *Bhakti* when the mind is externalised. Who can be a greater *Jnani* than Adi Sankaracharya, and at the same time who can be a greater devotee ? Do not his devotional songs, hundreds and thousands, breathe the very fragrance of *Bhakti* of the highest type ? Taking any devotional song of his, one feels the thrill of *Bhakti*, of self-surrender, of ecstatic devotion, of perfect self–sacrifice. And on the other hand, his Vedantic proclamations—'I am Siva and not Jiva' show perfect oneness ! There is no difference of God and devotee; it is all one undifferentiated ocean of *Sachitananda*. There '*dasoham*' dissolves in '*soham.*'

The point to note is that Self–realisation is the free gift of God, when he is pleased with the love of the devotee. He knows the opportune moment when this *Atma jnana* can flash in

the mind of the devotee. Till the field is ready, no intelligent farmer sows the seeds. The Lord who is Omniscient can see the ripeness of His devotee's heart, and that very moment Self-realisation dawns on the human heart. The Lord says, '*dadami*' (I will give) making it perfectly clear that the devotee has to keep his heart pure and ready to receive the *yoga* of Knowledge. The price of knowledge is devotion to the Lord. All the aspirants have to pass through these stages of development till perfection is attained. And perfection is the reward of God to His humble devotees.

Question : *How can man attain Moksha ?*

Answer : By Buddhi yoga (i. e.) enquiry into the nature of the real and the unreal.

Question : *How can man acquire the power of discrimination ?*

Answer : By loving devotion to the Lord, man receives Buddhi-yoga as a divine gift.

Question : *What are the qualifications of the devotee to receive the gift of knowledge ?*

Answer : Continuous and loving worship of the Lord.

11\. तेषामेवानुकम्पार्थमहमज्ञानजं तमः ।
नाशयाम्यात्मभावस्थो ज्ञानदीपेन भास्वता ॥ ११

Tesham eva'nukampartham aham ajnanajam tamah ।
nasayamyatmabhavastho jnanadipena bhasvata ॥ 11

Meaning : तेषाम् *tesham :* for them, अनुकम्पार्थम् *anukampartham :* out of compassion, अहमेव *aham eva :* I alone, आत्मभावस्थः *atmabhavasthah :* dwelling in their heart, भास्वता *bhasvata :* luminous, ज्ञानदीपेन *jnanadipa :* with the lamp of Knowledge, अज्ञानजम् *ajnanajam :* born of ignorance, तमः *tamah :* darkness, नाशयामि *nasayami :* I destroy.

Substance : Out of compassion for them, I, dwelling in their heart, destroy the darkness born of ignorance by the effulgent light of Knowledge.

Commentary: The Lord's compassion for His devotees is revealed here. The Lord is pleased with their undivided devotion, and wishes to confer an eternal gift on them. The Lord knows that wealth, power, position and children, are not eternal reward. They pass away in time. So He wishes to bestow on them the everlasting gift of *Brahmajnana*. We understand from this that no one can reach that state without God's grace, and that God's grace is to be attained by pure and perfect devotion to the Lord.

Knowledge derived through *Buddhiyoga* is compared to a lamp that dispels darkness as soon as it is lighted. The light of knowledge thus shatters all darkness of ignorance. Nothing else but light can dispel darkness. One may struggle with darkness eternally with all his weapons, and yet it will not go, till by striking a match he brings in light. Such also is ignorance. One may do everything – *Japa*, *Tapa*, *Pranayama*, or *Karma* – and yet ignorance cannot be removed except by the flash of intutional knowledge of Self. All other practices are intended to purify the mind and render it capable of perceiving the Truth (Brahman). They are means of Self-purification.

Who causes this flash of knowledge? Who confers this *Buddhiyoga*? The Lord. Where is He seated? He is seated in the human heart. It is He who kindles the light of knowledge. Without His grace, this cannot happen. And this lamp of knowledge (*Jnanadipa*) is luminous (*bhasvata*). It is self-luminous, it is luminosity itself. Its effect is immediate. The darkness of ignorance which is enveloping man for ages and ages is shattered at one stroke, once for all. No more does he wander in the wilderness of *samsara*. No more does he think of quenching his thirst in the waters of a mirage. He now knows the sharp distinction between the real and the unreal. He is now a *Jivanmuktah*. The bound soul who was thinking of himself as a body, subject to birth and death and all the thousand shocks of earthly existence, now realises in a flash that He is the immaculate and perfect *Atma*. He will realise that all those former thoughts of himself as a mortal, man and woman, weak and strong, happy and unhappy, lucky or unlucky, were mere

superstitious hallucinations, and delusions. He will realise that at no time was he bound, that he is free at all times, but imagined himself to be bound and enslaved by ignorance (*Avidya*). He regains his freedom which is his birth-right, which he thought he had lost but which he never really lost. This knowledge comes to the devotee by the grace of the Lord.

"I destroy the darkness born of ignorance is the exhortation of the Lord." The Lord has declared that *Maya* is difficult to cross, but those who take refuge in Him cross over His *Maya* which is Divine and composed of qualities. As this is the Lord's promise, the aspirants have the duty to put faith in Him and worship Him with all their heart and soul. Then they will receive *Brahmajnana*, as the highest reward of their devotion. It comes at the proper time when the aspirant is ripe enough to receive it. So, no one need be disheartened that he has not yet received the light. Let him carry out the command of the Lord and wait with absolute trust and faith in the Divine will.

Question: *When does man attain Moksha*?

Answer: When the darkness born of ignorance is removed.

Question: *How is it removed*?

Answer: By the light of knowledge.

Question: *How is the light obtained*?

Answer: It is the gift of God.

Question: *To whom*?

Answer: To the one who receives God's compassion.

Question: *On whom does His compassion descend*?

Answer: On him who worships Him with love and faith.

Question: *How does the Lord know the heart of the devotee*?

Answer: Because the Lord is present in the hearts of all.

Question: *Where from delusion arise*?

Answer: From ignorance (avidya).

Question : *What is knowledge* ?

Answer : It is luminous, destroys ignorance and lights the path to liberation.

Arjuna adores the Lord and prays to Him to reveal His manifold Glory.

अर्जुन उवाच

12. परं ब्रह्म परं धाम पवित्रं परमं भवान् ।
पुरुषं शाश्वतं दिव्यमादिदेवमजं विभुम् ॥ १२

13. आहुस्त्वामृषयः सर्वे देवर्षिर्नारदस्तथा ।
असितो देवलो व्यासः स्वयं चैव ब्रवीषि मे ॥ १३

Arjuna uvacha

Param brahma param dhama
pavitram paramam bhavan ।
purusham sasvatam divyam
adidevam ajam vibhum ॥ 12

Ahustvam rishaya sarve devarshir naradas tatha
asito devalo vyasah svayam chai'va bravishime ॥ 13

अर्जुन उवाच *Arjuna Uvacha* : Arjuna said.

Meaning : भवान् *bhavan* : Thou, परंब्रह्म *parambrahma* : Supreme Brahman, परंधाम *paramdhama* : Supreme Abode, परमं पवित्रम् *paramam pavitram* : Supreme purifier, त्वाम् *tvam* : Thee, शाश्वतम् *sasvatam* : Eternal, दिव्यम् *divyam* : Divine, पुरुषम् *Purusham* : purusha, आदिदेवम् *adidevam* : primeval God, अजम् *ajam* : unborn, विभुम् *vibhum* : Omnipresent, सर्व ऋषयः *sarve rishayah*: all sages, देवर्षिः नारदः *devarshih naradah* : the Devarshi Narada, असितः *asitah* : Asita, देवलः *devalah* : Devala, व्यासः *vyasah* : Vyasa, आहुः *ahuh*: (they) declared, स्वयंच *svayam cha* : and Thou, तथा एव *tatha eva* : also even, मे *me* : to me, ब्रवीषि *bravishi* : say (the same).

Substance : Arjuna Said: Though art the Supreme Brahman, the Supreme abode, the Supreme purifier, Eternal Divine Purusha, Primeval God, unborn and Omnipresent.

Thus have all the Rishis acclaimed Thee, so also Devarshi Narada, Asita, Devala, and Vyasa; and now, Thou Thyself sayest (the same) to me.

Commentary : When the Lord spoke of His compassion for the devotees, and how he confers knowledge on them who worship Him with love and faith, Arjuna was lifted up by a mighty upsurge of devotional fervour. His adoration for the Lord reaches the peak point. His love and worship attain the highest state. His joy knows no bounds. From that fulness of heart proceeds Arjuna's ecstatic adoration as revealed in these two verses. Such devotion to the *Guru* is needed to receive enlightenment. The blossoming of the heart through devotion makes the disciple fit to understand the Truth propounded by the Master.

Question : *What is the nature of* ***Krishna*** *Paramatma* ?

Answer : He is Supreme Brahman, Supreme Abode, purifier, primeval God, Eternal and Divine Purusha, unborn and Omnipresent.

Question : *Who spoke of the Lord thus* ?

Answer : The Seven Rishis, Devarshi Narada, Asita, Devala, and Vyasa, and the Lord Himself has declared the same truth to Arjuna.

14. सर्वमेतदृतं मन्ये यन्मां वदसि केशव ।
न हि ते भगवन्व्यक्तिं विदुर्देवा न दानवाः ॥ १४

Sarvam etad ritam manye yan mam vadasi kesava ।
na hi te bhagavan vyaktim vidur deva na danavah ॥ 14

Meaning : केशव *kesava* : O Krishna ! यत् *yat* : what, माम् *mam* : to Me, वदसि *vadasi* : Though sayest, एतत् सर्वम् *etat sarvam* : that all, ऋतम् *ritam* : (is) the truth, मन्ये *manye*:

I think, भगवन् *bhagavan* : O Lord, ते *te* : thy, व्यक्तिम् *vyaktim*: true personality, देवाः *devah* : the Gods, न विदुः *na viduh* : do not know, दानवाश्च *danavah cha* : and the Asuras, न हि विदुः *na hi viduh* ; do not know indeed.

Substance: O Lord Krishna ! All that Thou sayest to me I think to be the truth. Thy true personality, neither the *Devas* nor the *Danavas* (Asuras) know indeed.

Commentary: Arjuna's faith in the Lord's declaration is revealed here. Such faith is expected of the disciple towards his master. This very faith, simple and childlike, and utter confidence in the *Guru's* words, draws the compassion of the Master towards his humble disciple.

15. स्वयमेवात्मनात्मानं वेत्थ त्वं पुरुषोत्तम ।
भूतभावन भूतेश देवदेव जगत्पते ॥ १५

Svayameva'tmana'tmanam vettha tvam purushottama ।
bhutabhavana bhutesa devadeva jagatpate ॥ 15

Meaning: पुरुषोत्तम *purushottama* : O Supreme Purusha ! भूतभावन *bhutabhavana* : Source of all beings ! भूतेश *bhutesa* : Lord, controller of all beings ! देवदेव *devadeva* : God of Gods! जगत्पते *jagatpate* : Ruler of the universe, त्वम् *tvam* : thou, आत्मानम् *atmanam* : Thy true from, आत्मना *atmana* : by thyself, स्वयं एव *svayam eva* : thyself verily, वेत्थ *vettha* : know

Substance: O Purushothama ! Source of all beings ! God of Gods ! Ruler of the world ! Thyself indeed know Thyself by Thyself ! (For others it is inscrutable and mysterious).

16. वक्तुमर्हस्यशेषेण दिव्या ह्यात्मविभूतयः ।
याभिर्विभूतिभिर्लोकानिमांस्त्वं व्याप्य तिष्ठसि ॥ १६

Vaktum arhasyaseshena divyahyatma vibhutayah ।
yabhir vibhutibhir lokan imamstvam vyapya tisthasi ॥ 16

Meaning: हि *hi* : so, याभिः विभूतिभिः *yabhih vibhutibhih*: by what sovereign Glory (extension of Thy Glory), त्वम् *tvam*: Thou, इमान् लोकान् *iman lokan* : these worlds, व्याप्य *vyapya* : pervading, तिष्ठसि *tishthasi* : exist, दिव्याः *divyah* : (those) divine, आत्मविभूतयः *atmavibhutayah* : Thy Glories, अशेषेण *aseshena* : fully, वक्तुम् *vaktum* : to speak, अर्हसि *arhasi* : (Thou alone) art competent.

Substance: Therefore, deign to tell me without reserve of your divine Glories (the extension of Thy divine power) by which Glories you exist, pervading all these worlds.

Commentary: The Lord alone could be the interpreter, the commentator of His own Divine Sovereignity. Arjuna, as the faithful devotee, prays to the Lord to reveal His Glories as no one else knows Him.

17. कथं विद्यामहं योगिंस्त्वां सदा परिचिन्तयन् ।
केषु केषु च भावेषु चिन्त्योऽसि भगवन्मया ॥ १७

Katham vidyam aham yogimstvam sada parichintayan ।
keshu-keshu cha bhaveshu chintyo'si bhagavan maya ॥ 17

Meaning: योगिन् *yogin* : O Lord of Yoga, अहम् *aham* : I, सदा *sada* : always, कथम् *katham* : how, परिचिन्तयन् *pari-chintayan* : thinking, meditating, त्वाम् *tvam* : Thee, विद्याम् *vidyam* : (I) can know, भगवन् *bhagavan* : O Blessed Lord, केषु केषु भावेषु च *keshu keshu bhaveshu cha* : and in what and what aspects, चिन्त्यः असि मया *chintayah asi maya* : Thou art to be thought of by Me.

Substance: O Lord of *Yoga* ! How shall I ever meditating know Thee ? In what and what aspects (or objects) art Thou to be thought of by me ? O Blessed Lord !

Commentary: Arjuna's prayer is indeed the prayer of all spiritual seekers. Rarely does a man realise the subtle

formless Brahman. All seekers are functioning through the senses and the mind, and the objective world is present before their eyes. The Lord having permeated the whole universe, in what and what aspects and forms He should be cognised and worshipped is the question. The Lord points out some of the outstanding manifestations of His Divine Glory. The Seeker may take up any form and offer worship in the firm belief that it is the Supreme Lord Himself.

18. विस्तरेणात्मनो योगं विभूतिं च जनार्दन।
भूयः कथय तृप्तिर्हि शृण्वतो नास्ति मेऽमृतम्॥ १८

Vistarena'tmano yogam vibhutim cha janardana ।
bhuyah kathaya tripitr hi srinvato na'sti me 'mritam । 18

Meaning : जनार्दन *janardana :* O Krishna! आत्मनः *atmanah :* Thy, योगम् *yogam :* yogic power, विभूतिं च *vibhutim cha :* and Glory (playful manifestations in the universe), विस्तरेण *vistarena :* comprehensively, भूयः *bhuyah :* again, कथय *kathaya :* tell, हि *hi :* because, अमृतम् *amritam:* Nectar (the Lord's teaching), शृण्वतः *srinvatah :* listening, मे *me :* to me, तृप्तिः *tripth :* satisfaction, नास्ति *nasti :* is not.

Substance : O Krishna! Tell me again in detail of your *Yogic* power and sovereign Glory; for, listening to your nectar-like (life-giving) speech, I do not find satisfaction, (I am eager to hear more and more from you).

Commentary : The Lord's teaching is Nectar (*amritam*) to Arjuna. Who can find satiety listening to such life-giving teaching, when the Lord is Himself the Speaker? Who can say 'enough'? The teaching is immortal like the Lord Himself. The disciple should have such relish for the *Guru's* words. All other things, the best of them, produce the negative effect after some time. But the Lord's song of Immortality and Eternal Bliss can have no end, no diminution of interest and taste. It grows and grows till the whole being of man is filled with blissful adoration.

The Lord reveals His Glories, the highest of them, as there is no end to His Glory.

श्री भगवानुवाच

19. हन्त ते कथयिष्यामि दिव्या ह्यात्मविभूतयः।
प्राधान्यतः कुरुश्रेष्ठ नास्त्यन्तो विस्तरस्य मे॥ १९

Sri Bhagavan uvacha

Hanta te kathayishyami divya hyatmavibhutayah ।
pradhanyatah kurusreshta na'styanto vistarasya me । 19

श्री भगवानुवाच *Sri Bhagavan Uvacha :* The Blessed Lord Said.

Meaning : कुरुश्रेष्ठ *kurusreshta :* O Best of Kurus, हन्त *hanta :* lo (now), दिव्याः *divyah :* divine, आत्मविभूतयः *atma-vibhutayah :* My Glories, प्राधान्यतः *prathanyatah :* in their prominence, ते *te :* to you, कथयिष्यामि *kathayishyami :* I will tell, हि *hi :* for, मे *me :* to Me, विस्तरस्य *vistarasya :* extension of Glory, अन्तः *antah :* end, नास्ति *na asti :* is not.

Substance : The blessed Lord said : O Arjuna! Now, I will declare to you My divine Glories in their prominence, for there is no end to the extension of My divine Glory.

Commentary : Indeed, where can there be an end to the glorious manifestation of the Lord? He is infinite, and so His Glory is infinite. That is why the Lord declares only the most excellent in which the seeker could easily discover the Lord's presence. In fact there is not a particle of matter or energy or intelligence or virtue which is not a manifestation of the Lord. This universality of outlook and inner understanding is the highest form of devotion.

From this verse onwards till the 39th verse the Lord declares His manifold Glory.

20. अहमात्मा गुडाकेश सर्वभूताशयस्थितः।
अहमादिश्च मध्यं च भूतानामन्त एव च॥ २०

Aham atma gudakesa sarva bhutasayasthitah ।
aham adis cha madhyam cha bhutanam anta eva cha । 20

Meaning : गुडाकेश *Gudakesa* : O Arjuna ! सर्वभूताशयस्थितः *sarvabhutasayasthitah* : seated in the hearts of all beings, आत्मा *atma* : Atma (Pratyagatma), अहमेव (अस्मि) *aham eva (asmi)* : I alone (am), भूतानाम् *bhutanam* : of Beings, आदिः च *adih cha* : also origin or source, मध्यं च *madhyam cha*: and middle, अन्तश्च *antah cha* : and end, अहम् *aham* : I.

Substance : O Arjuna ! I am the Self seated in the hearts of all beings; the origin, middle and also the end of beings, I alone (am).

Commentary : In the very first declaration the Lord states that He is *Atma* dwelling in the hearts of all beings.

The *Pratyagatma* seated in the heart of every being is the Lord Himself. As *Atma*, he is the eternal witness (*Sakshi*) of the functions of the body, mind, and *buddhi* (reason). *Atma*, the witness is no other than *Jivatma* (*Pratyagatma*) who is no other than *Paramatma*. The *Mahavakya* that embodies the highest Truth is here stated. The *Jiva*, by ignorance, has identified himself with the extraneous body and mind, and thus he has forgotten his divine nature. When knowledge dawns, this very *Jiva* comes to realise in a flash that he is *Paramatma* Himself, and there the quest for Truth comes to an end, for he has now discovered that he is the all-pervading, all-blissful, omniscient Self of all. All ideas of littleness and separateness are mere superstitions and hallucinations. They should be rejected once for all, and the Divinity of the Self should be clearly understood, firmly held and definitely realised.

The Lord is present in every being. So, love and friendly feelings towards all, non-injury and service, should be cultivated by the seeker in the true spirit that he is serving the Lord Himself.

As the world is super-imposed on the Lord who is the basis and foundation, and as what is super-imposed (like the

snake in the rope) cannot be different from the original, the Lord is Himself the universe. Therefore He is its origin, its middle and its end.

Let all the aspirants think of the grand and lofty truth that they are veritably the *Pratyagatma*, and certainly not the little ego caught in the cage of flesh. So thinking and meditating, the Truth is permanently realised in proper season. Then is man released from all dreams of pain, sorrow and delusion. Thus awake, arise and stop not till the goal is reached.

Gudakesa : *Gudaka+esa*—One who has conquered sleep (i. e.) who has risen above the Tamasic plane. Food and sleep, are stealing the treasure of life. So it is man's first duty to see that they do not ransack his spiritual treasure.

Question : *Who is that Pratyagatma dwelling in the hearts of all beings ?*

Answer : He is Paramatma Himself.

Question : *What further is His nature ?*

Answer : He is the origin, the middle, and the end of all beings.

21. आदित्यानामहं विष्णुर्ज्योतिषां रविरंशुमान् ।
मरीचिर्मरुतामस्मि नक्षत्राणामहं शशी ॥ २१

Adityanam aham vishnur jyotisham ravir amsuman ।
marichir marutam asmi nakshatranam aham sasi ॥ 21

Meaning : अहम् *aham* : I, आदित्यानाम् *adityanam* : among Adityas, विष्णुः *vishnuh* : Vishnu, ज्योतिषाम् *jyotisham* : among luminous objects, अंशुमान् *amsuman* : radiant, रविः *ravih* : Ravi, मरुताम् *marutam* : among the Marut Devas, मरीचिः *marichih* : Marichi, अहम् *aham* : I, नक्षत्राणाम् *nakshatranam* :

among the asterisms (stars), शशी *sasi :* the Moon, अस्मि *asmi:* am.

Substance : Among Adityas I am Vishnu, among lumanaries I am the Sun; among the Marut Devas, I am Marichi; among the asterisms (Stars) I am the Moon.

Commentary : The Adityas, sons of Aditi, are twelve-(1) Dhata, (2) Mitra, (3) Aryama, (4) Sakra, (5) Varuna, (6) Amsu, (7) Bhaga, (8) Vivasvan, (9) Pusha, (10) Savita, (11) Tvashta, (12) Vishnu. These names are mentioned in the Adi Parva of Mahabharata.

The Lord declares that He is Vishnu among the Adityas, implying that His glory is most manifest in Vishnu. The other beings mentioned should be understood in a similar manner. The Lord has stated that He would mention the most powerful of the manifestations. In the small heap of stones as well as in the Himalayas, He is equally present. Both are His manifestations. And yet, in the Himalayas we see a vaster and mightier manifestation which will satisfy the seeker's imagination and give him an immediate perception of His Glory.

The Marut Devas are seven : (1) Ahava, (2) Pravaha, (3) Nivaha, (4) Paravaha, (5) Udvaha, (6) Samvaha, (7) Parivaha (Marichi).

22. वेदानां सामवेदोऽस्मि देवानामस्मि वासवः ।
इन्द्रियाणां मनश्चास्मि भूतानामस्मि चेतना ॥ २२

Vedanam samavedo'smi devanam asmi vasavah ।
indriyanam manas cha'smi bhutanam asmi chetana ॥ 22

Meaning : वेदानाम् *vedanam :* among the Vedas, सामवेदः *samavedah :* the Sama Veda, अस्मि *asmi :* I am, देवानाम् *devanam :* among the Devas, वासवः *vasavah :* Indra, अस्मि *asmi :* I am, इन्द्रियाणाम् *indriyanam :* among the senses, मनश्च *manas cha :* also mind, अस्मि *asmi :* I am, भूतानाम्

bhutanam : of the beings, चेतना *chetana :* life intelligence, अस्मि *asmi :* I am.

Substance : Among the Vedas, I am Sama Veda; among the Gods, I am Indra; among the senses I am the mind; and I am intelligence among living beings.

23. रुद्राणां शङ्करश्चास्मि वित्तेशो यक्षरक्षसाम् ।
वसूनां पावकश्चास्मि मेरुः शिखरिणामहम् ॥ २३

Rudranam sankaras cha'smi vitteso yaksharakshasam ।
vasunam Pavakas cha'smi meruh sikharinam aham ॥ 23

Meaning : रुद्राणाम् च *rudranam cha :* among the Rudras and, शङ्करः *sankarah :* Sankara, अस्मि *asmi :* I am, यक्षरक्षसाम् *yaksharakshasam :* among the Yakshas and Rakshasas, वित्तेशः *vittesah :* Kubera, the Lord of wealth, वसूनाम् *vasunam :* among Vasus, पावकः च *pavakah cha :* and Agni, शिखरिणाम् *sikharinam :* among mountains, मेरुः *meruh :* Meru, अहम् *aham :* I, अस्मि *asmi :* am.

Substance : Among the Rudras, I am Sankara; among the Yakshas and Rakshasas, I am Kubera, the Lord of Wealth; among Vasus, I am Agni, and of mountains I am Meru.

Commentary : The Rudras are eleven : (1) Hara, (2) Bahurupa, (3) Tryambaka, (4) Aparajita, (5) Vrishakapi, (6) Sambhu, (7) Kapardi, (8) Raivata, (9) Mrigavyadha, (10) Sarva, (11) Kapali.

The eleven Rudras are mentioned in Harivamsa.

The Vasus are eight : (1) Dhara, (2) Dhruva, (3) Soma, (4) Ahu, (5) Anila, (6) Anala, (7) Pratyusha, (8) Prabhasa. The eight Vasus are mentioned in the Adiparva of Mahabharata.

24. पुरोधसां च मुख्यं मां विद्धि पार्थ बृहस्पतिम् ।
सेनानीनामहं स्कन्दः सरसामस्मि सागरः ॥ २४

Purodhasam cha mukhyam mam viddhi partha brihaspatim ।
senaninam aham skandah sarasam asmi sagarah ॥ 24

Meaning : पार्थ *partha :* O Arjuna, पुरोधसाम् *purodhasam:* among household priests, मुख्यम् *mukhyam :* the chief, बृहस्पतिम् च *brihaspitim cha :* (and) Brihaspati, माम् *mam :* Me, विद्धि *viddhi :* know, अहम् *aham :* I am, सेनानीनाम् *senaninam :* among generals, स्कन्दः *Skandah :* Skanda, सरसाम् *sarasinam :* among lakes, सागरः *sagarah :* the ocean, अस्मि *asmi :* I (am).

Substance : O Arjuna! Among the household priests, know Me as the chief Brihaspati; among generals, I am Skanda; among lakes I am the Ocean.

Commentary : *Chief*–Prominence and excellence are the chief marks of the Divine.

25. महर्षीणां भृगुरहं गिरामस्म्येकमक्षरम् ।
यज्ञानां जपयज्ञोऽस्मि स्थावराणां हिमालयः ॥ २५

Maharshinam bhrigur aham giram asmy ekam aksharam ।
yajnanam japayajno'smi sthavaranam himalayah ॥ 25

Meaning : अहम् *aham :* I am, महर्षीणाम् *maharshinam :* among the great sages, भृगुः *bhriguh :* Bhrigu, गिराम् *giram :* among words, एकम् अक्षरम् *ekam aksharam:* the one syllable (OM), अस्मि *asmi :* I am, यज्ञानाम् *yajnanam :* among yajnas, जपयज्ञः *japayajnah :* the yajna of silent repetition, स्थावराणाम् *sthavaranam :* among immovable objects, हिमालयः *himalayah :* (I am) the Himalayas, अस्मि *asmi :* I am.

Substance : Among the great *Rishis*, I am Bhrigu; among words, I am the One syllable OM (*Pranava*); among sacrifices, I am the sacrifice of silent repetition (*Japa*); among immovable objects, I am the Himalayas.

Commentary : *Ekamaksharam*–Though there are thousands of words, yet the single syllable OM (*Pranava*) is the Lord Himself. He is *Pranava*. The sanctity and the divinity of this syllable OM is declared many times in the Scriptures. It

is the greatest purifier. It is the sound symbol of Brahman. Its repetition removes all sins. Contemplation of its meaning and significance leads to *Moksha*. Of what avail is it to waste the precious breath of life in endless talking of a thousand useless and undesirable matters? May all thh seekers take to *Pranava* with faith, and thereby derive the highest spiritual reward.

Japayajnosmi : The Lord declares that He is the sacrifice of silent repetition (*japa*) among the sacrifices. The sacred power of *Japayajna* is thus proved by the Lord Himself. It is the most powerful act of sacrifice. All the impurities, vicious tendencies, violent passions, are removed by *Japayajna*. Other sacrifices mentioned in the *Vedas* are difficult to perform for the common man, because they require wealth, labour and the help of many people. But nothing is needed for this *Japa yajna*. Every one can do it. There are several *Mantras* mentioned in the scriptures for *Japa*. The seeker can choose any one of them and perform this sacrifice to his heart's content with ease and facility. The Lord is pleased with this *yajna*. Nay, it is the Lord Himself. Let all the aspirants carry on this *Yajna* for self–purification and attain Self–realisation.

26. अश्वत्थः सर्ववृक्षाणां देवर्षीणां च नारदः ।
गन्धर्वाणां चित्ररथः सिद्धानां कपिलो मुनिः ॥ २६

Asvatthah sarvavrikshanam devarshinam cha naradah ।
gandharvanam chitrarathah siddhanam kapilo munih ॥ 26

Meaning : सर्ववृक्षाणाम् *sarvavrikashanam :* among all trees, अश्वत्थः *asvatthah :* Asvattha, (I am), देवर्षीणाम् *devarshinam :* among divine Rishis, नारदः च *naradaha cha:* and Narda (I am), गन्धर्वाणाम् *gandharvanam :* among Gandharvas, चित्ररथः *chitrarathah :* Chitraratha (I am), सिद्धानाम् *siddhanam :* among Siddhas or perfected beings, कपिलः मुनिः *kapilo munih :* Kapila the sage. (I am).

Substance : Among all trees, I am *Asvattha*; and among the divine *Rishis*, I am Narada; among Gandharvas, I am Chitraratha; among Siddhas, I am the sage Kapila.

Commentary : The sanctity and miraculous power of this *Aswattha* tree is mentioned in the Puranas.

The *Aswattha* is the very embodiment of Vishnu from the roots to the leaves. Its fruits are Hari; under its shade great souls reside. Those who seek shelter under it are blessed with fulfilment of all their desires. They derive spiritual benefit and divine virtues. Therefore people worship this tree in various ways. It is also used for medicinal purposes.

27. उच्चैःश्रवसमश्वानां विद्धि माममृतोद्भवम् ।
ऐरावतं गजेन्द्राणां नराणां च नराधिपम् ॥ २७

Ucchaisravasam asvanam viddhi mam amritodbhavam ।
airavatam gajendranam naranam cha naradhipam ॥ 27

Meaning : अश्वानाम् *asvanam* : among horses, अमृतोद्भवम् *amritadbhavam* : born of nectar, उच्चैःश्रवसम् *ucchaisravasam* : Ucchaisravas, गजेन्द्राणाम् *gajendranam* : among lordly elephants, ऐरावतम् च *airavatam cha* : Airavatam and, नराणाम् *naranam* : among men, नराधिपम् *naradhipam* : the King, माम् *mam* : Me, विद्धि *viddhi*: know.

Substance : Among horses know Me as *Ucchaisravas*, born of nectar; among lordly elephants, as Airavata; and among men, as the King.

Commentary : *Ucchaisravam* and Airavata were born when the ocean of milk was churned by the Devas and the Danavas in ancient times.

28. आयुधानामहं वज्रं धेनूनामस्मि कामधुक् ।
प्रजनश्चास्मि कन्दर्पः सर्पाणामस्मि वासुकिः ॥ २८

Ayudhanam aham vajram dhenunam asmi kamadhuk ।
prajanas cha'smi kandarpah sarpanamasmi vasukih ॥ 28

Meaning : अहम् *aham* : I, आयुधानाम् *ayudhanam* : among weapons, वज्रम् *vajram* : the thunderbolt, धेनूनाम् *dhenunam* : among cows, कामधुक् *kamadhuk* : Kamadhenu,

अस्मि *asmi* : (I) am, प्रजनः *prajanah* : the progenitor, कन्दर्पः च *kandarpah cha* : and Manmadha, अस्मि *asmi* : (I) am, सर्पाणाम् *sarpanam* : among serpents, वासुकिः *vasukih* : Vasuki, अस्मि *asmi* : (I) am.

Substance : Among weapons, I am the thunderbolt; among cows, I am Kamadhenu; I am Manmadha among the progenitors, and among serpents, I am Vasuki.

29. अनन्तश्चास्मि नागानां वरुणो यादसामहम् ।
पितॄणामर्यमा चास्मि यमः संयमतामहम् ॥ २९

Anantas cha'smi naganam varuno yadasam aham ।
pitrinam aryama cha'smi yamah samyamatam aham ॥ 29

Meaning : अहम् *aham* : I, नागानाम् *naganam* : among Nagas, अनन्तः च *anantah cha* : and Ananta, अस्मि *asmi* : (I) am, यादसाम् *yadasam* : among water-deities, वरुणः *varunah* : Varuna, पितॄणां *pitrinam* : among pitris, or ancestors, अर्यमा च *aryama cha* : and Aryama, अहम् *aham* : I, संयमताम् *samyamatam* : among controllers, यमः *yamah* : the Lord of death, अस्मि *asmi*: (I) am.

Substance : I am Ananta among Nagas, I am Varuna among water-deities, I am Aryama among the Pitris, among controllers I am Yama, the Lord of Death.

Commentary : The Nagas are different from the serpents. The Nagas have many heads, but they are devoid of poison. The serpents have only one head but they are poisonous.

30. प्रह्लादश्चास्मि दैत्यानां कालः कलयतामहम् ।
मृगाणां च मृगेन्द्रोऽहं वैनतेयश्च पक्षिणाम् ॥ ३०

Prahladas cha'smi daityanam kalah kalayatam aham ।
mriganam cha mrigendro'ham vainateyas cha pakshinam ॥ 30

Meaning : अहम् *aham* : I, दैत्यानाम् *daityanam* : among Daityas, प्रह्लादः च *prahladah cha* : Prahalada and, कलयतां

kalayatam : among reckoners, कालः *kalah :* Time, मृगाणां च *mriganam cha :* and among beasts, मृगेन्द्रः *mrigendrah :* the Lord of the beasts, the lion, पक्षिणाम् *pakshinam :* among birds, वैनतेयः च *vainateyah cha :* and Garuda, the son of Vinata, अहम् *aham :* I (am).

Substance : Among Daityas I am Prahlada; among reckoners I am time; among beasts I am the lion, the Lord of beasts; and among birds I am Garuda, the son of Vinata.

Commentary : Prahlada is a Daitya, born in the race of Asuras, as the son of Hiranyakasipu, the king of Daityas, who denied the very existence of God and conquered the whole world by his power. And yet all the power of Hiranyakasipu was of no avail when he had to deal with his own little child Prahlada, who was born with Brahmajnana by the grace of Narada. The Daitya King tried all weapons at his command to kill Prahlada, but nothing could destroy the child who was one with the Lord Himself. So the Lord here declares that He is Prahlada among the Daityas. In the supreme state of *Bhakti*, the devotee and the Lord are one. Though the child was born in the demonical race, yet he could attain Divinity and perfection. So, race and birth are of no importance in spiritual enlightenment. Every one can seek for it and find it by the very purity of his heart and the intensity of his devotion.

The Lord is Time, the reckoner. Time embodies all actions, and brings forth their effects inevitably. Time is precious, and the seekers have to use it most carefully for their self-purification and spiritual advancement.

We find that beasts and birds are mentioned among the highest manifestations of the Lord. Gajendra is an elephant, Garuda is a bird–and yet they could attain Divinity by their devotion. Will it then be anything impossible for rational man to attain the highest state? Turning away from material things of momentary nature, let all men realise the divinity of their real Self.

31. पवनः पवतामस्मि रामः शस्त्रभृतामहम् ।
झषाणां मकरश्चास्मि स्रोतसामस्मि जाह्नवी ॥ ३१

Pavanah pavatam asmi ramah sastrabhritam aham |
jhashanam makaras cha'smi srotasam asmi jahnavi || 31

Meaning : अहम् *aham :* I (am), पवताम् *pavatam :* among purifiers or among objects of quick motion, पवनः *pavanah :* the wind, अस्मि *asmi* (I) am, शस्त्रभृताम् *sastrabhritam :* among wielders of weapons, warriors, रामः *Ramah :* Rama, झषाणाम् *jhashanam :* among fishes, मकरः च *makarah cha :* Makara (shark) and, अस्मि *asmi:* (I) am, स्रोतसाम् *srotasam:* among rivers, जाह्नवी *jahnavi :* the Ganges, अस्मि *asmi :* (I) am.

Substance : Among purifiers I am the wind; among warriors, I am Rama; among fishes, I am Makara; among rivers I am the Ganges.

Commentary : The Lord here declares that He is Rama. There is no difference between Krishna and Rama.

The purity and the sacredness of the Ganges is mentioned in innumerable places in the Scriptures and the Puranas.

32. सर्गाणामादिरन्तश्च मध्यं चैवाहमर्जुन ।
अध्यात्मविद्या विद्यानां वादः प्रवदतामहम् ॥ ३२

Sarganam adir antas cha madhyam chai va'ham arjuna |
adhyatmavidya vidyanam vadah pravadatam aham || 32

Meaning : अर्जुन *arjuna :* O Arjuna! सर्गाणाम् *sarganam:* among creations, आदिः *adih :* the beginning, अन्तश्च *antah cha:* and end, मध्यंच *madhyam cha :* and middle, अहम् एव *aham eva :* I am also, विद्यानाम् *vidyanam :* among sciences, अध्यात्मविद्या *adhyatma vidya :* the science of self–knowledge, प्रवदताम् *pravadatam :* among controversialists, वादः *vadah :* logic argument, अहम् *aham :* I am.

Substance : I am the beginning, the middle and also the end of all creations; I am the science of self-knowledge among sciences; I am logic or reason among controversialists or debaters.

Commentary : *Adhyatmavidya*-Among sciences the Lord is the science of Self-knowledge. We see that the modern world has made great advancement in all the sciences, and yet there is neither rest nor peace for countries and nations. Any rational thinker would naturally come to the conclusion that modern scientific achievements are not sufficient to bring peace and happiness to mankind. It is only Self-knowledge that can realise the inherent peace and freedom of mankind. The man of self-knowledge though he does not know any other science, is really the wise man who knows all. And the learned man who does not know the Truth is indeed unlearned and ignorant.

Vadah : Arguement is of three kinds-(1) Vada, (2) Jalpa, (3) Vitanda. The reasoning free from malice and hatred undertaken with the noble objects of understanding the Truth is '*Vada*'. The argument advanced with the object of establishing one's own creed and condemning others, is '*Jalpa*'. And the argument used merely for the purpose of abusing and condemning other creeds is '*Vitanda*'. The Lord is '*Vada*' (i. e.) the process of reasoning, questions, and answers, and debates which the wise undertake to know the Truth.

33. अक्षराणामकारोऽस्मि द्वन्द्वः सामासिकस्य च ।
अहमेवाक्षयः कालो धाताहं विश्वतोमुखः ॥ ३३

Aksharanam akaro'smi dvandvah samasikasya cha ।
aham evakshayah kalo dhata'ham visvatomukhah । 33

Meaning: अक्षराणाम् *aksharanam* : among letters अकारः *akarah* : the letter, 'A', अस्मि *asmi* : (I) am, सामासिकस्य *samasikasya* : among all compounds, द्वन्द्वः च *dvandvah cha* : and the dual, अक्षयः *akshayah* : everlasting, कालः *kalah* : Time, अहमेव *aham eva* : I alone, विश्वतोमुखः : *visvatomukhah* : All-faced (Omniscient), धाता *dhata* : the dispenser (of the fruits of actions), अहम् *aham* : I (am).

Substance : Among letters I am the letter A; I am the dual among all compounds; verily I am eternal time; I am the Dispenser of the fruits of actions, having faces in all directions (Omniscient).

34. मृत्युः सर्वहरश्चाहं उद्भवश्च भविष्यताम् ।
कीर्तिः श्रीर्वाक्च नारीणां स्मृतिर्मेधा धृतिः क्षमा ॥ ३४

Mrityuh sarvaharas cha'ham udbhavascha bhavisyatam ।
kirtih srir vakcha narinam smritir medha dhritih kshama । 34

Meaning: सर्वहरः *sarvaharah* : all-devouring. मृत्युः च *mrityuh cha* : death and, भविष्यताम् *bhavishyatam* : of those who are to be born, उद्भवश्च *udbhavah cha* : and origin, source, अहं *aham* : I (am), नारीणाम् *narinam* : of the feminine, कीर्तिः *kirtih* : fame, श्रीः *srih* : prosperity, वाक्च *vakcha* : and speech, स्मृतिः *smritih* : memory, मेधा *medha* : intelligence, धृतिः *dhritih* : firmness, क्षमा च *kshama cha* : and forgiveness.

Substance: And I am all-devouring Death; and the birth of those who are to be born; among the feminine qualities, I am fame, prosperity, speech, memory, intelligence, firmness and forgiveness.

Commentary : Seven virtues among women are mentioned by the Lord. Where these virtues are, whether in men or women, all are qualified for the highest realisation. Women are not weak; they have also in them the Divinity that lifts them up to the plane of spiritual realisation. The point to note is that where these qualities are found, there the Lord is.

The second line of the verse is interpreted in another way. *Prasuti*, the daughter of *Svayambhuva Manu*, married Dakshaprajapati, and to them were born twentyfour daughters. Among them, there are Kirti Devi, Medha Devi, Dhriti Devi, Smriti Devi and Kshama Devi. Sri Devi is the daughter of Bhrigu. Vagdevi is the daughter of Brahma (creator). These

seven are the presiding Deities of the seven virtues. The Lord here declares that He is all these seven feminine virtues. Whatever the interpretation may be it is clear that the functioning of these virtues is due to the Lord Himself.

This verse is an inspiring call to women to give up all superstitious notions about their weakness or lowness, and stand up to realise what is their birth-right along with men and Gods.

35. बृहत्साम तथा साम्नां गायत्री छन्दसामहम् ।
मासानां मार्गशीर्षोऽहं ऋतूनां कुसुमाकरः ॥ ३५

Brihatsama tatha samnam gayatri chandasam aham ।
masanam margasirsho'ham ritunam kusumakarah । 35

Meaning : तथा *tatha* : also, अहम् *aham* : I (am), साम्नाम् *samnam* : among Sama hymns, बृहत्साम *brihatsama* : Brihatsama, छन्दसाम् *chandasam* : among metres, गायत्री *gayatri* : Gayatri, मासानाम् *masanam* : among months, मार्गशीर्षः *margasirshah* : Margasirsha, ऋतूनाम् *ritunam* : among seasons, कुसुमाकरः *kusumakarah* : spring, the flowery season, अहम् *aham* : I (am).

Substance : Among the hymns, I am Brihatsama; among metres, I am Gayatri; among months, I am Margasirsha; among seasons, I am the flowering spring.

Commentary : The prominence of Margasirsha is to be known from the following :

(1) At the time of the Mahabharata, the year used to start with the month of Margasirsha.

(2) The Sastras declare that the month is most suitable and meritorious for the performance of vows and fasts etc.

(3) People obtain the new harvest and there is general prosperity.

(4) It is stated in the Ramayana, that Margasirsha is the ornament of the year.

(5) The Bhagavad Gita was proclaimed to Arjuna in the month of Margasirsha (*Suddha ekadasi*) on the 11 th day of the bright fortnight.

(6) Dattatreya was born in the same month (*Suddha Purnima*)

(7) The atmosphere is pleasant and equable and so the month is most suitable for *tapas* and *Sadhana* (Spiritual practice).

Kusumakarah : The spring season is the most beautiful, and nature puts forth all her beauty. Sri Rama was born in the month of Chaitra.

36. द्यूतं छलयतामस्मि तेजस्तेजस्विनामहम् ।
जयोऽस्मि व्यवसायोऽस्मि सत्त्वं सत्त्ववतामहम् ॥ ३६

Dyutam chalayatam asmi tejas tejasvinam aham ।
jayo'smi vyavasayo'smi sattvam sattvavatam aham । 36

Meaning : छलयताम् *chalayatam* : of the fraudulent, द्यूतम् *dyutam* : the gambling, अस्मि *asmi* : (I) am, तेजस्विनाम् *tejasvinam* : of the splendid, तेजः *tejah* : splendour, अस्मि *asmi* : (I) am, जयः *jayah* : victory, व्यवसायः *vyavasayah* : determination, सत्त्ववताम् *sattvavatam* : of the good, सत्त्वम् *sattvam* : goodness (Sattvaguna), अहम् *aham* : I (am), अस्मि *asmi* : (I) am.

Substance : I am the gambling of the fraudulent; of the splendid I am the splendour; I am victory; I am determination (of the determined); I am the goodness of the good.

Commentary : *Dyutam* : This word should be carefully understood. It is definitely not a licence given to the gamblers to carry on their fraudulent business. It is only an affirmation of the existence (*astitvam*) of the Lord in essence in every one of the activities, good and bad, carried on in the world. Good people carry on good work, and the bad bad work, and they reap the consequences accordingly. But the Lord is present in essence in all.

The Lord is victory. The Lord is determination. The aspirant has to realise the universality of the Lord by seeing Him everywhere, in all qualities and actions. His manifestation is to be realised in the splendid, good and eminent things. His existence (*astitvam*) is to be realised in all things.

37. वृष्णीनां वासुदेवोऽस्मि पाण्डवानां धनञ्जयः ।
मुनीनामप्यहं व्यासः कवीनामुशना कविः ॥ ३७

Vrishninam vasudevo'smi pandavanam dhanamjayah ।
muninam apyaham vyasah kavinam usana kavih ॥ 37

Meaning : अहम् *aham :* I (am), वृष्णीनाम् *vrishninam :* among the clan of Vrishnis (Yadavas), वासुदेवः *vasudevah :* Vasudeva, अस्मि *asmi :* (I) am, पाण्डवानाम् *pandavanam :* among the Pandavas, धनंजयः *dhanamjayah :* Arjuna, मुनीनामपि *muninam api:* among the Munis also, व्यासः *vyasah:* vyasa, कवीनाम् *kavinam:* among poets, उशना कविः *usana kavih :* Ushana the poet.

Substance : Among the Vrishnis, I am Vasudeva; among the Pandavas, I am Arjuna; I am Vyasa among the Munis; among poets I am Ushana, the poet (seer).

Commentary : Arjuna, the hearer of the Gita, Krishna the teacher and Vyasa the poet who recorded it, are all the manifestations of the Lord Himself.

Usanakavi : He is Sukracharya, the son of Bhrigu Maharshi.

38. दण्डो दमयतामस्मि नीतिरस्मि जिगीषताम् ।
मौनं चैवास्मि गुह्यानां ज्ञानं ज्ञानवतामहम् ॥ ३८

Dando damayatam asmi nitir asmi jigishatam ।
maunam chai'vasmi guhyanam jnanam jnanavatam aham ॥ 38

Meaning : अहम् *aham :* I (am), दमयताम् *damayatam :* of the punishers, दण्डः *dandah :* punishment (dandaniti),

अस्मि *asmi :* (I) am, जिगीषताम् *jigishatam :* of the seekers of victory, नीतिः *nitih :* statesmanship, अस्मि *asmi :* (I) am, गुह्यानाम् *guhyanam :* of the secrets, मौनं *maunam :* silence, अस्मि *asmi :* (I) am, ज्ञानवताम् *jnanavatam :* of the knowers, ज्ञानम् च *jnanam cha :* and Knowledge.

Substance : Of the punishers, I am punishment; of the seekers of victory, I am statesmanship; of the secrets I am silence. I am also knowledge of the knowers.

Commentary : The statesmanship approved by the *Sastras* in securing national welfare is also the Lord. True victory is always based on Truth, and that which is obtained by fraud and deception is no victory.

Maunam : The silence is also the Lord. Silence in word, silence in thought, are essential practices to attain self-control and mastery over one's lower nature. It leads to self-realisation.

Jnanam : Self-knowledge is the Lord Himself. It is His sovereign Glory.

39. यच्चापि सर्वभूतानां बीजं तदहमर्जुन ।
न तदस्ति विना यत्स्यान् मया भूतं चराचरम् ॥ ३९

Yaccha' pi sarvabhutanam bijam tad aham arjuna ।
na tad asti vina yat syan maya bhutam characharam ॥ 39

Meaning : अर्जुन *arjuna :* O Arjuna ! सर्वभूतानाम् *sarva-bhutanam:* of all beings, यत् *yat:* which, बीजम् *bijam:* the seed, the source, तत् अपि च *tat api cha:* and that also, अहम् *aham:* I (am), चराचरम् *characharam:* the moving and the non-moving, भूतम् *bhutam :* being, यत् स्यात् *yat syat :* what may be, तत् *tat :* that, मया *maya :* by me, विना *vina :* without, न *na :* not, अस्ति *asti :* is.

Substance : O Arjuna ! And whatever is the seed of all beings, that am I; nor is there anything moving or non-moving, that can exist bereft of Me.

Commentary : Having described His glories, the Lord now declares that He is the source of all beings, and nothing can exist bereft of Him. So all that we see is the Lord Himself. Every being is the menifestation of the Lord, even as the plant is just the manifestation of the seed. One should assert always the Divinity that exists everywhere. He should proclaim the Divinity in himself and in all others. This is the way to progress and realisation. All this is verily the Lord Himself. There cannot be any surer way to lift man from the vile state of weakness than the determined affirmation of his divine origin and his Divine destiny. Let all other thoughts be given up once for all. Let all beings live in the full consciousness that the Lord is in them, around them, and everywhere.

40. नान्तोऽस्ति मम दिव्यानां विभूतीनां परंतप ।
एष तूद्देशतः प्रोक्तो विभूतेर्विस्तरो मया ॥ ४०

Na'nto'sti mama divyanam vibhutinam paramtapa ।
esha tu'ddesatah prokto vibhutervistaro maya ॥ 40

Meaning : परंतप *parantapa* : O Arjuna ! मम *mama* : My, दिव्यानाम् *divyanam* : of Divine, विभूतीनाम् *vibhutinam* : glories, अन्तः *antah* : end, नास्ति *na asti* : is not, तु *tu* : but, एषः *eshah*: this, विभूतेः *vibhuteh* : of glory, विस्तरः *vistarah* : particulars, उद्देशतः *uddesatah* : brief statement, मया *maya* : by Me, प्रोक्तः *proktah* : has been declared.

Substance : O Arjuna ! There is no end of My Divine Glories; this is indeed a brief statement by Me of the particulars of My Glory.

Commentary : The Lord is infinite and hence His Glory cannot have an end.

41. यद्यद्विभूतिमत्सत्त्वं श्रीमदूर्जितमेव वा ।
तत्तदेवावगच्छ त्वं मम तेजोंऽशसंभवम् ॥ ४१

Yad-yad vibhutimat sattvam srimad urjitam eva va ।
tat-tad eva'vagaccha tvam mama tejomsasambhavam ॥ 41

Meaning : विभूतिमत् *vibhutimat* : glorious, श्रीमत् *srimat* : prosperous, ऊर्जितम् एव वा *urjitam evava:* powerful also, सत्त्वम् *gattvam:*thing or being, यद्यत् *yad-yad* : whatsoever, तत्तत् *tat tat* : that that, मम *mama* : My, तेजोंऽशसंभवम् एव *tejomsasambhavam eva* : manifestation of part of My splendour only, त्वम् *tvam* : you, अवगच्छ *avagaccha* : know.

Substance : O Arjuna ! Whatsoever is glorious, good, beautiful and mighty, that you understand to be only a fragment of My splendour.

Commentary: Whatever there is good-the profusion of knowledge, purity of heart, righteousness, beauty, power and splendour—all that is only a manifested fragment of the Lord's glory. All talents, all faculties, all arts and sciences, all intelligence, order, discipline, all that is admirable, grand, great and splendid, are the manifestations of the Lord's glory. Let no man imagine that he has anything to be proud of. If he has prosperity, that prosperity is the Lord's; if he has power and intelligence, all that is the Lord's; if he has genius that genius is the Lord's. He who thinks that they are his own possessions, is guilty of mis-appropriating the Lord's plenty, and should suffer the penalty of loss and bereavement. These great attributes of the Lord should be contemplated continuously, so that they may become part and parcel of one's own nature and lead him to union with the Lord.

42. अथवा बहुनैतेन किं ज्ञातेन तवार्जुन ।
विष्टभ्याहमिदं कृत्स्नं एकांशेन स्थितो जगत् ॥ ४२

Athava bahunai'tena kim jnatena tava'rjuna ।
vistabhya'ham idam kritsnam ekamsena sthito jagat ॥ 42

Meaning : अर्जुन *arjuna* : O Arjuna ! अथवा *athava* : or, बहुना *bahuna* : many, एतेन *etena* : by this, ज्ञातेन *jnatena* : knowing, तव *tava* : of you, किम् *kim* : what, अहम् *aham* : I, इदम् *idam* : this, कृत्स्नाम् *kritsnam* : all, जगत् *jagat* :

universe, एकांशेन *ekamsena* : by one aspect, विष्टभ्य *vishtabhya* : pervading, स्थितः *sthitah* : (I) exist.

Substance : O Arjuna! But of what avail to you is the knowledge of all these details ? Having pervaded this whole universe with one fragment of Myself, I exist.

Commentary : The Lord ends this Discourse by declaring that there is no use of the detailed enumeration of His Divine Glories, because they are infinite, and the infinite cannot be rendered in terms of the finite. The Lord then sums up the whole idea in a single proclamation that the whole universe, with everything in it, is only a fragment of His Glory. What contemplation, what imaginative flight, what understanding, what vision, can fatham and comprehend the Infinity of the Lord ? These millions and millions of worlds are all pervaded by the Lord. His power is infinite.

In the presence of the Lord, what is man ? Let him bow down to the Lord. Let him sing the Lord's Glory. Let him offer himself up to the Lord. Let him live in the Lord, for there is nothing else but the Lord wherever he may turn. Egoism and pride have no place in the heart of a man who can think of the Lord's Glory. His little strength, little good, little beauty, little power, are nothing indeed, nothing before the Glory of the Lord. Thus thinking man realises the truth that the Lord is All and he is himself a part of the Lord.

Question : *By what is this universe pervaded ?*

Answer : The universe is only a fragrant of the Lord, and by a single aspect of His, all this is pervaded. (The idea is that in the Infinite form of the Lord, this whole universe occupies a very small part).

इति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे
श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे विभूतियोगो नाम
दशमोऽध्यायः ॥

Iti Srimad Bhagavadgitasupanishatsu brahmavidyayam yogasastre Sri Krishnarjuna samvade Vibhuti Yogo nama dasamo'dhyayah. ॥

Thus, in the Glorious Upanishads of the Bhagavad Gita, the Science of the Eternal, the Scripture of Yoga, the dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna ends the Tenth Discourse entitled–Vibhuti Yoga

(The Yoga of Divine Glories.)

4 5)

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श्री भगवद्गीता

SRI BHAGAVAD GITA

अथ एकादशोऽध्यायः

Atha Ekadasodhyayah.

ELEVENTH DISCOURSE

विश्वरूपसंदर्शन योगः

VISVARUPA SANDARSANA YOGA

THE YOGA OF THE VISION OF THE COSMIC-FORM.

I. The title of the Discourse :

Arjuna appeals to the Lord to reveal His Cosmic-form, and the Lord, pleased with his devotion, shows His Cosmic-Form. The Discourse is filled with the magnificient description of the Cosmic-Form, and Arjuna's divine prayer to the Lord. Therefore it is entitled Visvarupa Sandarsana Yoga.

II. Important points of the Discourse :

1) Arjuna's appeal to the Lord (1–4)
2) The Lord's estimate of His Cosmic-Form. (5–8)
3) Sanjaya describes the Visvarupa (9–14)
4) Arjuna's vision and prayer to the Lord (15–31)
5) The Lord reveals His power and inspires Arjuna to fight. (32–34)
6) The terrified Arjuna wishes to see the normal form of the Lord. (35–46)

7) The Lord declares the glory of seeing the Cosmic-Form, and assumes His normal form. (47–50)
8) Single-minded devotion alone qualifies a man to see the Cosmic-form. The excellence of Ananyabhakti. (51–55)

III. How this Discourse is connected with the previous one –

In the *Vibhuti Yoga*, the Lord spoke of His infinite Glories, and declared that He pervades the whole universe with a fragment of His sovereign Glory. Arjuna desires to see the Cosmic-Form, and appeals to the Lord to favour him with that vision. Theoritically, the disciple understood the universality of the Lord. But this was not enough. He fervently wished to behold directly the Cosmic-Form. Thus, if the *Vibhuti Yoga* states the principle, the *Visvarupa Sandarsana Yoga* is its ecstatic realisation through direct experience. The Discourse starts with Arjuna's prayer to the Lord.

अर्जुन उवाच

1 मदनुग्रहाय परमं गुह्यमध्यात्मसंज्ञितम् ।
यत्त्वयोक्तं वचस्तेन मोहोऽयं विगतो मम ॥ १

Arjuna uvacha

Madanugrahaya paramam guhyam adhyatmasamjnitam ।
yat tvayo'ktam vachas tena moho'yam vigato mama ॥ 1

अर्जुन उवाच *Arjuna Uvacha :* Arjuna said.

Meaning : मदनुग्रहाय *madanugrahaya :* out of grace (compassion) towards me, परमम् *paramam :* supreme, highest, गुह्यम् *guhyam :* secret, अध्यात्मसंज्ञितम् *adhyatmasamjnitam :* Adhyatma-named, यत् *yat :* which, वचः *vachah :* word; त्वया *tvaya :* by thee, उक्तम् *uktam :* said, तेन *tena :* by that, मम *mama :* my, अयं मोहः *ayam mohah :* this delusion, विगतः *vigatah :* is gone.

Substance : Arjuna Said–By the words of the highest secret concerning the Self, spoken by Thee out of compassion for me, my delusion is gone.

Commentary : Arjuna says that his delusion is gone by hearing the divine exposition of the Highest, by the Lord Himself. Arjuna was thinking, "These are my relations; how can I kill them ?" This kind of body–identification is gone. The Gita–teaching continues. But the fundamental Truth of the immortality of the Self has already been declared. And the all–pervading universality of the Lord has also been declared in definite terms. Arjuna is lifted out of the mire of delusion and despondency.

He speaks of the Lord's teaching as '*Paramam*' the highest and the best, and as '*Guhyam*'–the greatest secret, knowing which all delusion ceases.

The speaker is Lord Krishna and the hearer is Arjuna. What wonder that the Lord's medicine works on his deluded patient and cures him even before the course of treatment is completed! The effect of the Lord's teaching is immediately felt by the disciple. Most of the people are in the same position as Arjuna, deluded and beset with doubts. If they adopt the same attitude as Arjuna–"*Sishyaste ham sadhi mam tvam prapannam*"–there is absolutely no doubt that the Lord works on them with the same affection and compassion as he did in the case of Arjuna. What is needed is faith in the Lord. Arjuna had that faith, and so he declared that the teaching was given to him (*madanugrahaya*) by the compassion of the *Guru* towards his disciple. Those who have faith hope to have the same revelation as Arjuna had by the grace of the Lord. Krishna Paramatma is *Jagadguru*, and the Gita is the teaching for all mankind. Whoever believes himself to be a true disciple receives the teaching directly from Krishna Himself. Therefore let all people win the Lord's grace by total and un–conditional self–surrender to Him.

Question : *What is Adhyatma Vidya ?*

Answer : It is the highest and the great secret.

Question : *What is its power ?*

Answer : It removes delusion and ignorance and saves man from *Samsara.*

Question : *Why did Lord Krishna teach it to Arjuna ?*

Answer : Arjuna surrendered to the Lord with faith and devotion.

Question : *What was the effect ?*

Answer : His delusion was gone.

2. भवाप्ययौ हि भूतानां श्रुतौ विस्तरशो मया ।
त्वत्तः कमलपत्राक्ष माहात्म्यमपि चाव्ययम् ॥ २

Bhava pyayau hi bhutanam srutau vistaraso maya ।
tvattah kamalapatraksha mahatmyamapi cha'vyayam ॥ 2

Meaning : हि *hi* : indeed, कमलपत्राक्ष *kamalapatraksha* : O Lotus-eyed Krishana! त्वत्तः *tvattah* : from you, भूतानाम् *bhutanam* : of beings, भवाप्ययौ *bhavapyayau* : origin and dissolution, विस्तरशः *vistarasah:* in detail, मया *maya* : by me, अव्ययम् *avyayam* : inexhaustible, माहात्म्यम् अपिच *mahatmyam api cha* : and also (Thy) divine power, श्रुतौ *srutau* : have been heard.

Substance : O Krishna! From Thee verily have been heard in detal by me the origin and dissolution of beings, and also Thy inexhaustible divine power.

3. एवमेतद्यथात्थ त्वमात्मानं परमेश्वर ।
द्रष्टुमिच्छामि ते रूपमैश्वरं पुरुषोत्तम ॥ ३

Evam etad yatha'ttha tvam atmanam paramesvara ।
drastum icchami te rupam aisvaram purushottama ॥ 3

Meaning : परमेश्वर *parameswara* : O Supreme Lord, त्वम् *tvam :* Thou, आत्मानम् *atmanam :* of Thyself, यथा *yatha :* as, आत्थ *attha :* has declared, एवम् *evam :* (is) thus, (I believe), एतत् *etat :* that, पुरुषोत्तम *purushothama :* O Supreme Purusha, ते *te :* Thy, ऐश्वरम् *aisvaram :* divine (possessing Jnana, Aisvarya etc.—the cosmic power), रूपम् *rupam :* form, द्रष्टुम् *drashtum :* to see, इच्छामि *icchami :* I wish.

Substance : O Supreme Lord! Even as Thou hast described Thyself (I believe) Thou art, and I wish to see Thy Cosmic Form, Omnipotent, O best of Beings.

4. मन्यसे यदि तच्छक्यं मया द्रष्टुमिति प्रभो ।
योगेश्वर ततो मे त्वं दर्शयात्मानमव्ययम् ॥ ४

Manyase yadi tachakyam maya drastum iti prabho ।
yogesvara tato me tvam darsaya'tmanam avyayam ॥ 4

Meaning : प्रभो *prabho :* O Lord, तत् *tat :* that (thy Cosmic Form), मया *maya :* by me, द्रष्टुम् *drashtum :* to see, शक्यम् *sakyam :* possible, इति *iti :* thus, मन्यसे यदि *manyase yadi :* if Thou thinkest, ततः *tatah :* then, योगेश्वर *yogesvara :* O Lord of Yoga, त्वम् *tvam :* Thou, अव्ययम् *avyayam :* inexhaustible, आत्मानम् *atmanam :* Thyself (Form), मे *me :* to me, दर्शय *darsaya :* show.

Substance : O Lord of *Yoga*! If Thou thinkest that Thy Cosmic Form is possible for me to see, then deign to show me Thy imperishable Self.

Commentary : What we know here is the humility of Arjuna in appealing to the Lord to show His Cosmic Form, if it is possible for him to see it. Is he fit for it? Is he fit for seeing the vision? He did not demand it as a right, in the manner of a person who claims it as a reward of his devotion. Such humility is needed for every disciple in the presence of the *Guru*. He

should leave it to the teacher to give him any experience which he thinks fit for the disciple. The disciple does not know what he is, what his powers are, and what he is fit for. The teacher knows it. So Arjuna appeals to the Lord to show him the Cosmic Form if the Lord thinks that he is fit to see it. Moreover in the previous verse Arjuna has declared his complete faith in the words of the Lord. He believes every word of the Lord when He described His infinite Glory. So faith and humility are the only means to win the Lord's Grace.

The Lord describes His Cosmic Form and endows Arjuna with divine vision to see it.

श्री भगवानुवाच

5. पश्य मे पार्थ रूपाणि शतशोऽथ सहस्रशः ।
नानाविधानि दिव्यानि नानावर्णाकृतीनि च ॥ ५

Sri Bhagavan uvacha

Pasya me partha rupani sataso'tha sahasrasah ।
nanavidhani divyani nanavarnakritini cha ॥ 5

श्री भगवानुवाच — *Sri Bhgavan Uvacha:* The blessed Lord said.

Meaning : पार्थ *partha :* O Arjuna! नानाविधानि *nanavidhani:* of different sorts, दिव्यानि *divyani :* divine, नानावर्णाकृतीनिच *nanavarrakritini cha :* and of different colours and shapes, शतशः *satasah :* by hundreds, अथ *atha :* and, सहस्रशः *sahasrasah:* by thousands, मे *me :* My, रूपाणि *rupani :* forms, पश्य : *pasya :* behold.

Substance : The Blessed Lord said : Behold O Arjuna! forms of Me, by hundreds and thousands of different sorts, divine and of various colours and shapes.

6. पश्यादित्यान्वसून्रुद्रानश्विनौ मरुत स्तथा ।
बहून्यदृष्टपूर्वाणि पश्याश्चर्याणि भारत ॥ ६

Pasya'dityan vasun rudran asvinau marutasthatha ।
bahunyadristapurvani pasya'scharyani bharata ॥ 6

Meaning : भारत *bharta :* O Arjuna ! आदित्यान् *adityan :* the Adityas, वसून् *vasun :* The Vasus, रुद्रान् *rudran :* the Rudras, अश्विनौ *asvinau :* the two Asvins, मरुतः *marutah :* the Maruts, पश्य *pasya :* behold, तथा *tatha :* also, अदृष्टपूर्वाणि *adrishtapurvani :* not seen before, बहूनि *bahuni :* many, आश्चर्याणि *ascharyani :* wonders, पश्य *pasya :* behold.

Substance : Behold, O Arjuna ! the *Ad yas*, the *Vasus*, the *Rudras*, the two *Asvins*, the *Maruts*, also many wonderful forms never seen before (by you and by others).

Commentary : (1) The *Adityas*–twelve, the *Vasus*–eight, the *Rudras*-eleven, the *Asvini Devas*–two, the *Maruts*–forty nine.

7. इहैकस्थं जगत्कृत्स्नं पश्याद्य सचराचरम् ।
मम देहे गुडाकेश यच्चान्यद्द्रष्टुमिच्छसि ॥ ७

Ihai'kastham jagat kritsnam pasya'dya sacharacharam ।
mama dehe gudakesa yacha'nyad drastum icchasi ॥ 7

Meaning : गुडाकेश *gudakesa :* O Arjuna ! सचराचरम् *sacharacharam :* with the moving and non–moving, कृत्स्नम् *kritsnam :* whole, जगत् *jagat :* universe, अन्यत् यत् *anyat yat:* whatever else, द्रष्टुम् इच्छसि *drashtum icchasi :* you wish to see, च *cha :* also, मम *mama :* My, इह *iha :* this, देहे *dehe :* in body, एकस्थम् *ekastham :* centred in one place (like a limb in the body), अद्य *adya :* now, पश्य *pasya :* behold.

Substance : Here, O Arjuna ! behold the whole universe movable and immovable, and whatever else you desire to see, centred in one place in My body.

Commentary : In the *Vibhuti Yoga*, the Lord declared that the whole universe exists as a fragment of His Glory (*Ekamsena sthito Jagat*). So here, the Lord asks Arjuna to behold the whole universe standing like one of the limbs in the body. One

can only imagine the infinity of the Lord. Nay, it is beyond all imagination, to whatever extent it may be stretched by human effort. Physical space is indeed unimaginably large; larger should be the mindspace; larger still should be '*Chidakasa.*' In this infinity (*Atma*) the whole universe (*Jagat*) is like a spot.

The Lord of infinite forms, all pervading, all powerfull, is no other than *Paramatma* who is the ruler of all the worlds (*Sarvaloka mahesvaram*). Knowing Him as such, it is man's duty to worship Him with faith, devotion, and humility. Verily, there is no cause for man to feel proud of his little wealth or power or position. What are man's wealth and powers ? What is man after all in the scheme of this universe ? What after all is this earth where man glorifies himself by building a small state or empire ? Man's egoism and pride for his so called achievements is sheer delusion (*Avidya*). What is small appears great; what is not appears to be the reality; what is death-struck appears immortal. This ignorance, the mother of pride and arrogance, will vanish as man truly contemplates the might of *Isvara* and His infinite Glory. Let the seeker be filled with adoration to the Lord, infinite and wonderful. Let his humility purify his heart. Let egotism vanish into nothing and then the Lord comes to dwell in the heart of the meek and the humble. Then comes true devotion (*Para bhakti*).

The Lord endows Arjuna with divine vision to see the Cosmic–Form.

8. न तु मां शक्यसे द्रष्टुमनेनैव स्वचक्षुषा ।
दिव्यं ददामि ते चक्षुः पश्य मे योगमैश्वरम् ॥ ८

Na tu mam sakyase drastum anenai'va svachakshusha ।
divyam dadami te chakshuh pasya me yogam aisvaram । 8

Meaning : अनेन *anena :* with this, स्वचक्षुषा एवतु *svachakshusha evatu :* with (your) own eyes only, माम् *mam :* me, द्रष्टुम् *drashtum :* to see, न शक्यसे *na sakyase :* you cannot, दिव्यम् *divyam :* divine, चक्षुः *chakshuh :* eye, ते *te :* to you, ददामि *dadami :* I give, ऐश्वरम् *aisvaram :* sovereign, मे *me :* my, योगम् *yogam :* yoga, पश्य *pasya :* behold.

Substance : But you cannot see Me with these your own eyes; I give unto you the divine eye; behold My sovereign *yoga*.

Commentary : The eye of flesh can only see material things. Even physical ether is invisible to the naked eye. The limitations of the human eye and the gross delusions to which it is subject every moment, is within the experience of every thoughtful man. That the human eye is grossly erroneous in its perceptions can be seen from very simple facts. Sitting in the railway carriage, the eye sees the objects around moving with terrific speed. It sees the stationery sun crossing the sky from east to west. It sees the moon running behind the rushing clouds. All these show that the naked eye cannot be trusted to give us a correct picture of anything in the world. In fact, the eye is the most powerful cause of delusion for man. So, the Lord here says that Arjuna cannot see the Cosmic-Form by himself with his own eyes.

"Drisyate tvagraya buddhya sukshamaya sukshmadarsibhih."-Paramatma is seen by the subtle concentrated intellect of the Seers. So say the *Upanishads*. Though the Lord is everywhere, man is not able to see Him because ignorance covers the eye. This is the veil of *Maya*; this is the darkness or ignorance. When the covering film is taken away, the eye of knowledge sees the Truth, and delusion vanishes.

As the blind man cannot see the sun, so also the eye of the ignorant cannot see the all-pervading Self. It is utter nonsense to say that God does not exist because He is not seen by the eye of flesh. The argument would be as convincing as the blind man's denial of the existence of the sun.

How then can man attain the divine eye to see the Lord? Assuredly, by the grace of the Lord, by His love, by His compassion. "*Dadami te chakshuh*", says the Lord (I give to you the divine eye). To whom does he give the divine eye ?-To those who are devoted to Him. (*Tesham satatayuktanam dadami buddhiyogam*-10-10). The same idea is emphasised here. Repeatedly does the Lord inculcate the idea of surrender to Him in a spirit of devotion and humility. "Worship Me," He says,

"in every possible way; take refuge in Me; surrender to Me; I will give you knowledge, peace and bliss." Arjuna had surrendered to the Lord, and so he has qualified himself to see the Cosmic-Form, and the Lord bestows on him the divine eye for that purpose.

The divine eye comes to all without distinction of caste, creed, religion, or nationality. If it does not open, it is one's own fault. "Knock and it shall be opened." The knocking must be there. Relentless perseverence is needed. Such spiritual thirst for the Divine bears fruition in the Lord's grace descending on man. Let everyone follow the footsteps of Arjuna and obtain the Lord's grace.

Divyam : Divine-obtained by the possession of **divine** virtues (*daivisampat*).

Question : *Can man see the Lord with the physical eye ?*

Answer : No.

Question : *How to see Him then ?*

Answer : With the divine eye of Knowledge.

Question : *How can this divine eye open ?*

Answer : By the grace of the Lord.

Question : *Who obtains the Lord's grace ?*

Answer : He who is devoted to Him with faith and humility obtains His grace.

Sanjaya describes to Dhritarashtra the wonderful glory of the Cosmic-Form.

सञ्जय उवाच

9. एवमुक्त्वा ततो राजन्महायोगेश्वरो हरिः ।
दर्शयामास पार्थाय परमं रूपमैश्वरम् ॥ ९

Samjaya uvacha

Evam uktva tato rajan mahayogesvaro harih ।
darsayamasa parthaya paramam rupam aisvaram ॥ 9

सञ्जय उवाच *Sanjaya uvacha :* Sanjaya said.

Meaning : राजन् *rajan :* O King Dhritarashtra ! महायोगेश्वरः *mahayogeswarah :* the Great Lord of yoga, हरिः *harih :* Hari (Krishna), एवम् *evam :* thus, उक्त्वा *uktva :* having spoken, पार्थाय *parthaya :* to Arjuna, परमम् *paramam :* (His) supreme, ऐश्वरम् *aisvaram :* divne, रूपम् *rupam:* Cosmic-Form, दर्शयामास *darsayamasa :* revealed.

Substance : Sanjaya said-O King Having thus spoken the great Lord of *Yoga*, Hari, showed to Arjuna His supreme divine Form.

Commentary : By the grace of Vedavyasa, Sanjaya obtained the power to see all that happened on the battle-field, including the wonderful vision of the Lord's Cosmic - Form. He is reporting it to King Dhritarashtra.

10. अनेकवक्त्रनयनमनेकाद्भुत दर्शनम् ।
अनेकदिव्याभरणम् दिव्यानेकोद्यतायुधम् । १०

11. दिव्यमाल्याम्बरधरं दिव्यगन्धानुलेपनम् ।
सर्वाश्चर्यमयं देवं अनन्तं विश्वतो मुखम् ॥ ११

Aneka vaktra nayanam anekadbuta darsanam ।
aneka divyabharanam divyanekodyatayudham ॥ 10

Divya malyambara dharam divya gandhanulepanam ।
sarvascharyamayam devam anantam visvatomukham ॥ 11

Meaning : अनेकवक्त्रनयनम् *anekavaktranayanam :* with numerous mouths and eyes, अनेकाद्भुतदर्शनम् *anekadbhuta-darsanam :* with numerous wonderful sights, अनेकदिव्याभरणम् *anekadivyabharanam :* with numerous divine ornaments, दिव्यनेकोद्यतायुधम् *divyanekodyatayudham :* with numerous divine

weapons uplifted, दिव्यमाल्याम्बरधरम् *divyamalyambaradharam :* wearing divine garlands and apparel, दिव्यगन्धानुलेपनम् *divyagandhanulepanam :* anointed with divine unguents, सर्वाश्चर्यमयम् *sarvascharyamayam :* all wonderful, देवम् *devam :* resplendent, अनन्तम् *anantam :* endless, विश्वतोमुखम् *visvatomukham:* with faces on all sides.

Substance : With numerous mouths and eyes, with numerous wonderful sights, with numerous divine ornaments, with numerous divine weapons uplifted, wearing divine garlands and apparel, anointed with divine unguents, all wonderful, resplendent, endless, with faces on all sides-(so was the Lord's Cosmic-Form).

12. दिवि सूर्यसहस्रस्य भवेद्युगपदुत्थिता ।
यदि भाः सदृशी सा स्याद्भासस्तस्य महात्मनः ॥ १२

Divi surya sahasrasya bhaved yugapad utthita ।
yadi bhah sadrisi sa syad bhasas tasya mahatmanah ॥ 12

Meaning : दिवि *divi :* in the sky, सूर्यसहस्रस्य *surya-sahasrasya :* of a thousand suns, भाः *bhah :* splendour, युगपत् *yugapat :* at once, उत्थिता भवेत् यदि *utthita bhavetyadi :* if were arisen, सा *sa :* that, तस्य *tasya :* of that, महात्मनः *mahatmanah :* mighty Being, भासः *bhasah :* splendour, सदृशी *sadrisi :* equal, स्यात् *syat :* would be.

Substance : If the splendour of a thousand suns were to blaze out together in the sky, that would resemble the glory of that mighty Being.

13. तत्रैकस्थं जगत्कृत्स्नं प्रविभक्तमनेकधा ।
अपश्यद्देवदेवस्य शरीरे पाण्डवस्तदा ॥ १३

Tatrai'kastham jagat kritsnam pravibhaktam anekadha ।
apasyad devadevasya sarire pandavastada ॥ 13

Meaning : तदा *tada :* then, पाण्डवः तत्र *pandvah tatra :* Arjuna, there, अनेकधा *anekadha :* in many groups, प्रविभक्तम् *pravibhaktam :* divided, कृत्स्नम् जगत् *kristnam jagat :* whole universe, देवदेवस्य *devadevasya :* of the God of Gods, शरीरे *sarire :* in the body, एकस्थम् *ekastham :* placed in one spot, अपश्यत् *apasyat :* beheld.

Substance : There, in the body of the God of Gods, Arjuna then saw the whole universe divided into many groups placed in one spot.

Commentary : The universe appeared to Arjuna as one of the limbs in the body of the God of Gods. In the infinite Cosmic intelligence (consciousness) of the Lord, the world rests in some small nook or corner as a limb, a finger tip or a toe-in the human body.

Pravibhaktam : The universe is differentiated into various groups of objects. But there is no such differentiation in *Paramatma* who is One.

Amazed at the wonderful vision Arjuna adores the Lord.

14. ततः स विस्मयाविष्टो हृष्टरोमा धनञ्जयः ।
प्रणम्य शिरसा देवं कृताञ्जलिरभाषत ॥ १४

Tatah sa vismayavisto hristaroma dhanamjayah ।
pranamya sirasa devam kritanjalirabhashata । 14

Meaning : ततः *tatah* : then, सः धनंजयः *sah dhanamjayah :* he, Arjuna, विस्मय अविष्टः *vismayavishtah :* filled with wonder, हृष्टरोमा *hrishtaroma :* with hair standing on end, देवम् *devam :* to the Lord, शिरसा *sirasa :* with his head, प्रणम्य *pranamya :* having bowed down, कृताञ्जलिः *kritanjalih :* folding his palms, अभाषत *abhashata :* spoke.

Substance : Then he, Arjuna overwhelmed with amazement, his hair standing on end, having bowed down his head, and with palms joined thus spoke to the Lord.

Commentary : The ecstatic mood of Arjuna is described here. He is overwhelmed with wonder and amazement. His hair stands on end. And he is at the same time filled with deep reverence and devotion to the Lord. Folding his hands, he bows down his head before the inscrutable mystery of the Lord's Manifestation.

अर्जुन उवाच

15. पश्यामि देवांस्तव देव देहे
सर्वांस्तथा भूतविशेषसङ्घान् ।
ब्रह्माणमीशं कमलासनस्थ
मृषींश्च सर्वानुरगांश्च दिव्यान् ॥ १५

Arjuna uvacha

Pasyami devamstava deva dehe
sarvamstatha bhuta visesha samghan ।
brahmanam isam kamalasanastham
risimscha sarvan uragamcha divyan ॥ 15

अर्जुन उवाच *Arjuna uvacha :* Arjuna Said.

Meaning : देव *deva :* O Lord, तव देहे *tava dehe :* in Thy body, सर्वान् देवान् *sarvan devan :* all the Gods, तथा *tatha :* also, भूतविशेषसंघान् *bhutaviseshasamghan :* hosts of various classes of beings, कमलासनस्थम् *kamalasanastham :* seated in the Lotus, ईशम् ब्रह्माणम् *isam brahmanam :* the Lord Brahma, सर्वान् ऋषीन् च *sarvan rishin cha:* all and sages, दिव्यान् उरगान् च *divyan uragan cha :* Divine serpents and पश्यामि *pasyami:* I see.

Substance : Arjuna said : O Lord ! I see in Thy body, all the Gods, also hosts of various classes of beings, Brahma, the Lord, seated on the Lotus, all the Sages and celestial serpents.

Commentary : *Isam* : This may be taken to refer to Siva (Brahma seated on the Lotus, and Siva).

16. अनेकबाहूदरवक्त्रनेत्रं
पश्यामि त्वां सर्वतोऽनन्तरूपम् ।
नान्तं न मध्यं न पुनस्तवादिं
पश्यामि विश्वेश्वर विश्वरूप ॥ १६

Aneka bahudara vaktra netram
pasyami tvam sarvato'nantarupam ।
na'ntam na madhyam na punastava'dim
pasyami visvesvara visvaruya ॥ 16

Meaning : विश्वेश्वर *Visvesvara* : O Lord of the Universe, विश्वरूप *visvarupa* : O Cosmic Being, अनेक बाहूदरवक्त्रनेत्रम् *anekabahudaravaktra netram* : with manifold arms, stomachs, mouths, eyes, अनन्तरूपम् *anantarupam* : of boundless form, त्वाम् *tvam* : Thou, सर्वतः *sarvatah* : everywhere, पश्यामि ***pasyami:*** I see, पुनः *punah* : again, तव *tava* : of Thine, आदिम् ***adim*** : beginning, नपश्यामि *na pasyami* : I do not see, मध्यम् *madhyam* : middle, न *na* : not, अन्तम् *antam* : end, न *na* : not.

Substance : I see Thee of boundless form on every side with manifold arms, stomachs, mouths and eyes; neither the end nor middle nor beginning of Thine do I see.

17. किरीटिनं गदिनं चक्रिणं च
तेजोराशिं सर्वतो दीप्तिमन्तम् ।
पश्यामि त्वां दुर्निरीक्ष्यं समन्ता
दीप्तानलार्कद्युतिमप्रमेयम् ॥ १७

Kiritinam gadinam chakrinam cha
tejorasim sarvato diptimantam ।
pasyami tvam durnirikshyam samantad
diptanalarkadyutimaprameyam ॥ 17

Meaning : त्वाम् *tvam* : Thee, दुर्निरीक्ष्यम् ***durnirikshyam*** : dazzling the gaze, समन्तात् *samantat* : all round, किरीटिनम् *kiritinam* : with diadem, गदिनम् *gadinam* : with mace, चक्रिणम् *chakrinam* : with discus, च *cha* : and, तेजोराशिम् *tejorasim* : mass of radiance, सर्वतः *sarvatah* : everywhere, दीप्तिमन्तम् *diptimantam* : shining, दीप्तानलार्कद्युतिम् *diptanalarka-dyutim* : blazing like burning fire and sun, अप्रमेयम् *aprameyam* : immeasurable, पश्यामि ***pasyami*** : I see.

Substance : I see Thee with diadem, mace, and discus, shining everywhere, a mass of radiance, dazzling the gaze, blazing like the burning fire and sun, from all sides in the sky, immeasurable.

18. त्वमक्षरं परमं वेदितव्यं
त्वमस्य विश्वस्य परं निधानम् ।
त्वमव्ययः शाश्वतधर्मगोप्ता
सनातनस्त्वं पुरुषो मतो मे ॥ १८

Tvam aksharam paramam veditavyam
tvam asya visvasya param nidhanam ।
tvam avyayah sasvata dharma gopta
sanatanastvam purusho mato me ॥ 18

Meaning : त्वम् *tvam* : Thou, वेदितव्यम् *veditavyam* : worthy to be known, अक्षरम् *aksharam* : imperishable, परमम् *paramam* : the Supreme Being, त्वम् *tvam* : Thou, अस्य विश्वस्य *asya visvasya*: of this universe, परम् *param* : great, निधानम् *nidhanam* : treasure-house, त्वम् *tvam* : Thou, अव्ययः *avyayah* : inexhaustible, शाश्वतधर्मगोप्ता *sasvatadharmagopta* : protector of the eternal Dharma, त्वम् *tvam* : Thou, सनातनः पुरुषः *sanatanah purushah* : Ancient Purusha, मे *me* : of me, मतः *matah* : thought.

Substance : Thou art the imperishable Supreme Being, worthy to be known; Thou art the great treasure-house of the universe; Thou art the protector of the Eternal Dharma; Thou art the ancient Purusha, I deem.

Commentary : *Sasvatadharmagopta* : *Dharma* is eternal. At no time does it perish. Its power may be reduced or corrupted at times, but the Lord sustains it in such periods when *Adharma* dominates the world. The Lord is Himself the highest *Dharma*. Nothing can please the Lord more than adherence to *Dharma*. Men who follow the law of righteousness are the most dear devotees of the Lord.

19. अनादिमध्यान्तमनन्तवीर्य
मनन्तबाहुं शशिसूर्यनेत्रम् ।
पश्यामि त्वां दीप्तहुताशवक्त्रं
स्वतेजसा विश्वमिदं तपन्तम् ॥ १९

Anadi madhyantamanatna viryam
ananta bahum sasi surya netram ।
pasyami tvam dipta hutasa vaktram
svatejasa visvam idam tapantam ॥ 19

Meaning: अनादिमध्यान्तम् *anadimadhyantam* : without beginning, middle and end, अनन्तवीर्यम् *anantaviryam* : of boundless power, अनन्तबाहुम् *anantabahum* : of innumerable arms, शशिसूर्यनेत्रम् *sasisuryanetram* : The moon and sun Thy eyes, दीप्तहुताशवक्त्रं *diptahuta savaktram* : Thy mouth of burning fire, स्वतेजसा *svatejasa*: with Thy brilliance, विश्वम् इदं *visvamidam*: this universe, तपन्तम् *tapantam* : burning, त्वम् *tvam* : Thee, पश्यामि *pasyami* : I see.

Substance : Without beginning, middle, and end, infinite in power, with sun and moon as Thy eyes, of endless arms, the burning fire Thy mouth, burning the whole universe with Thy radiance, I see Thee.

20. द्यावापृथिव्योरिदमन्तरं हि
व्याप्तं त्वयैकेन दिशश्च सर्वाः ।
दृष्ट्वाद्भुतं रूपमुग्रं तवेदं
लोकत्रयं प्रव्यथितं महात्मन् ॥ २०

Dyavaprithivyoridam antaram hi
vyaptam tvayai'kena disas cha sarvah ।
dristva'dbhutam rupam ugram tave'dam
lokatrayam pravyathitam mahatman ॥ 20

Meaning : महात्मन् *mahatman* : O Mahatma ! द्यावापृथिव्यः *dyavaprithivyah* : of Heaven and earth, इदं अन्तरम् *idam antaram* : this interspace, सर्वाः दिशः च *sarvah disah cha* : and all quarters, त्वया *tvaya* : by thee, एकेन *ekena* : alone, व्याप्तम् हि *vyaptam hi* : are filled indeed, उग्रम् *ugram* : terrible, अद्भुतम् *adbhutam* : wonderful, तव *tava* : Thine, इदं *idam* : this, रूपम् *rupam* : Form, दृष्ट्वा *drishtva* : having seen, लोकत्रयम् *lokatrayam*: the (beings of the) three worlds, प्रव्यथितम् *pravyathitam* : are trembling with fear.

Substance : This interspace of heaven and earth and all quarters are indeed filled by Thee alone; having seen Thy wonderful and terrible Form, the three worlds are trembling with fear, O Mahatma !

21. अमी हि त्वां सुरसङ्घा विशन्ति
केचिद्भीताः प्राञ्जलयो गृणन्ति ।
स्वस्तीत्युक्त्वा महर्षि सिद्धसङ्घाः
स्तुवन्ति त्वां स्तुतिभिः पुष्कलाभिः ॥ २१

Ami hi tvam surasamgha visanti
kechid bhitah pranjalayogrinanti ।
svasti'tyuktva maharshi siddhasamghah
stuvanti tvam stutibhih pushkalabhih ॥ 21

Meaning : अमी *ami* : these, सुरसङ्घाः *surasanghah* : hosts of Devas, त्वाम् *tvam* : into Thee, विशन्ति हि *visanti hi* : verily enter, केचित् *kechit* : some, भीताः *bhitah* : in fear, प्राञ्जलयः

pranjalayah : with folded hands, गृणन्ति *grinanti :* praise Thee, महर्षिसिद्धसङ्घाः *maharshisiddhasanghah :* the bands of great Rishis and Siddhas, स्वस्ति *svasti :* may it be well (to the worlds), इति *iti :* thus, उक्त्वा *uktva :* having spoken, पुष्कलाभिः *pushkalabhih :* sublime, स्तुतिभिः *stutibhih :* with hymns, त्वाम् *tavam :* Thee, स्तुवन्ति *stuvanti :* extol.

Substance : These hosts of *Devas* enter Thee; some in fear with joined palms praise Thee; the bands of *Rishis* and *Siddhas* extol Thee with hymns sublime, having said, "May it be well" (*Svasti*).

Commentary : *Svasti* : "May it be well to all the worlds," is always the prayer of great souls. They have so intimately found their unity with the world that they wish for its welfare with all their heart and soul. "*Swasti prajabhyah*"–should be the universal prayer of all aspirants.

Stuvanti : With sublime hymns and songs, the *Rishis* and *Siddhas* extol the Lord. When the wise thus express their devotion through prayer, is it not the duty of common mortals to follow their example ?

22. रुद्रादित्या वसवो ये च साध्या
विश्वेऽश्विनौ मरुतश्चोष्मपाश्च ।
गन्धर्वयक्षासुरसिद्धसङ्घा
वीक्षन्ते त्वां विस्मिताश्चैव सर्वे ॥ २२

Rudraditya vasavo ye cha sadhyah
visve'svinau marutas cho'shmapas cha ।
gandharva yakshasura siddha samgha
vikshante tvam vismitas chai'va sarve ॥ 22

Meaning : रुद्रादित्याः *rudradi yah :* Rudras and Adityas, वसवः *vasavah :* vasus, ये च *ye cha :* and these, साध्याः *sadhyah :* Sadhyas, विश्वे *visve :* Visvedevas, अश्विनौ *asvinau :* the two Asvins, मरुतः *marutah :* Maruts, च *cha :* and, ऊष्मपाः *ushmapah:* Pitris, च *cha :* and, गन्धर्वयक्षासुरसिद्धसङ्घाः *gandharvayakshasura–siddhasanghah :* hosts of Gandharvas, Yakshaws, Asuras, Siddhas, सर्वे *sarve :* all, च *cha :* and, एव *eva :* even, विस्मिताः *vismitah :* amazed, त्वाम् *tvam :* Thee, वीक्षन्ते *vikshante :* look at.

Substance : These *Rudras* and *Adityas, Vasus, Sadhyas, Visvedevas*, the two *Asvins*, the *Maruts*, the *Pitris*, and *Gandharvas, Yakshas, Asuras* and *Sidhas* even all, are looking at Thee, struck with amazement.

23. रूपं महत्ते बहुवक्त्रनेत्रं
महाबाहो बहुबाहूरुपादम् ।
बहूदरं बहुदंष्ट्राकरालं
दृष्ट्वा लोकाः प्रव्यथितास्तथाहम् ॥ २३

Rupam mahat te bahu vaktra netram
mahabaho bahu bahurupadam ।
bahudaram bahu damstrakaralam
dristva lokah pravyathitastatha'ham ॥ 23

Meaning : महाबाहो *mahabaho :* O Mighty–armed Krishna ! बहुवक्त्रनेत्रम् *bahuvaktranetram :* with many mouths and eyes, बहुबाहूरुपादम् *bahubahurupadam :* with many arms, thighs and feet, बहूदरम् *bahudaram :* with many stomachs, बहुदंष्ट्राकरालम् *bahudamshtrakaralam :* fearful with many tusks, ते *te :* Thine, महत् *mahat :* immeasurable, रूपम् *rupam :* Form (Cosmic), दृष्ट्वा *drishtva :* having seen, लोकाः *lokah :* the worlds, प्रव्यथिताः *pravyathitah :* are terrified, तथा *tatha :* so also, अहम् *aham :* I.

Substance : O Mighty–armed Krishna ! With many mouths and eyes, with many arms, thighs and feet, with many stomachs, fearful with many tusks, having seen Thy magnificient Form, the worlds tremble with fear and so also I.

24. नभः स्पृशं दीप्तमनेकवर्णं
व्यात्ताननं दीप्तविशालनेत्रम् ।
दृष्ट्वा हि त्वां प्रव्यथितान्तरात्मा
धृतिं न विन्दामि शमं च विष्णो ॥ २४

Nabhah sprisam diptam aneka varnam
vyattananam dipta visala netram ।
dristva hi tvam pravyathitantaratma
dhritim na vindami samam cha vishno ॥ 24

Meaning : विष्णो *vishno* : O Vishnu ! नभः स्पृशं *nabhah sprisam* : touching the sky, दीप्तम् *diptam* : radiant, अनेकवर्णम् *anekavarnam* : of many colours, व्यात्ताननम् *vyattananam* : with mouths wide open, दीप्तविशालनेत्रम् *diptavisalanetram* : with eyes large and fiery, त्वाम् *tvam* : Thee, दृष्ट्वा *drishtva* : having seen, प्रव्यथितान्तरात्मा *pravyathitantaratma* : struck with terror, अहम् *aham* : I, धृतिम् *dhritim* : courage, शमम् च *samam cha* : and peace, न विन्दामि हि *na vindamihi* : I do not find.

Substance : Having seen Thy Cosmic Form, touching the sky, flaming in many colours, with mouths wide open, with large and fiery eyes, terrified at heart I find not either courage or peace.

25. दंष्ट्राकरालानि च ते मुखानि
दृष्ट्वैव कालानलसन्निभानि ।
दिशो न जाने न लभे च शर्म
प्रसीद देवेश जगन्निवास ॥ २५

Damstrakaralani cha te mukhani
dristval'va kalanalasannibhani ।
diso na jane na labhe cha sarma
prasida devesa jagannivasa ॥ 25

Meaning : दंष्ट्राकरालानि *damshtrakaralani* : horrid with tusks, कालानल सन्निभानि च *kalanalasannibhani cha* : and blazing like the fire of Pralaya, ते *te* : Thy, मुखानि *mukhani* : mouths, दृष्ट्वा *drishtva* : having seen, दिशः *disah* : the four quarters, न जाने *na jane* : I do not find (utterly stunned), शर्म च *sarma cha* : and peace, न लभे एव *na labhe eva* : also I do not find, देवेश *devesa* : O Lord of the Gods ! जगन्निवास *jagannivasa* : Abode of the Universe ! प्रसीद *prasida* : be gracious.

Substance : Having seen Thy mouths, horrid with tusks, blazing like the Fire of *Pralaya*, I do not see the four quarters nor find peace; Be gracious, O Lord of the Gods ! Abode of the Universe !

26. अमी च त्वां धृतराष्ट्रस्य पुत्राः
सर्वे सहैवावनिपालसङ्घैः ।
भीष्मो द्रोणः सूतपुत्रस्तथासौ
सहास्मदीयैरपि योधमुख्यैः ॥ २६ ॥

27. वक्त्राणि ते त्वरमाणा विशन्ति
दंष्ट्राकरालानि भयानकानि ।
केचिद्विलग्ना दशनान्तरेषु
संदृश्यन्ते चूर्णितैरुत्तमाङ्गैः ॥ २७

Ami cha tvam dhritarastrasya putrah
sarve sal ai'va'vanipalasanghaih ।
bhishmo dronah sutaputras tatha'sau
saha'smadiyairapi yodhamukhyaih ॥ 26

Vaktrani te tvaramana visanti
damstrakaralani bhayanakani ।
kechid vilagna dasanantareshu
samdrisyante churnitair uttamangaih ॥ 27

Meaning : अमी *ami :* those, धृतराष्ट्रस्य पुत्राः *dhritarashtrasya-putrah :* the sons of Dhritarashtra, सर्वे *sarve :* all, भीष्मः *bhishmah :* Bhishma, द्रोणः *dronah :* Drona, असौ सूतपुत्रः *asau-sutaputrah :* this Karna (son of the charioteer), अवनिपालसंघैः *avanipalasanghaih :* with the hosts of the Kings of the earth, सह *saha :* together, एव *eva :* even, तथा *tatha :* also, अस्मदीयैः *asmadiyaih :* with those of our, योधमुख्यैः अपि *yodhamukhyaih apisah :* with the chief–warriors, त्वाम् *tvam :* thee, त्वरमाणाः *tvaramanah :* hurrying, दंष्ट्राकरालानि *damshtrakaralani :* fearful with tusks, भयानकानि *bhayanakani :* terrifying, ते *te :* Thy, वक्त्राणि *vaktrani :* mouths, विशन्ति *visanti:* enter, केचित् *kechit :* some, दशनान्तरेषु *dasanantareshu :* in the gates between the teeth, विलग्नाः *vilagnah :* sticking, चूर्णितैः *churnitaih:* crushed to powder, उत्तमाङ्गैः *uttamangaih :* with their heads, संदृश्यन्ते *sandrishyante :* are found.

Substance : All the sons of Dhritarashtra, together with the hosts of the Kings of the earth, Bhisma, Drona and Karna, and also together with the chief warriors on our side, enter hurrying into Thy mouths fearful with tusks and horrid, some caught in the gates between the teeth are found with their heads crushed to powder.

Commentary : In *Paramatma* who is Time, there is no division of past, present and future. Therefore Arjuna sees in the Cosmic–Form the whole vision of the future. He finds the Kauravas, the Kings, Bhishma, Drona, Karna, and also the warrior–chiefs on his own side, hurrying into the horrid mouth of the Lord. What does this mean ? All beings come out of the Lord and go back into Him. All time is one universal present for the Lord. He is Time, He is beyond Time. The idea of the division of Time is created in Him.

The vision of Arjuna should be a revelation to every human being. All that appears to exist in the various shapes and

forms as wife, children, wealth and possessions, Kingdoms and powers, are crushed to death under the mighty chariot wheel of Time. Nothing remains of the fond illusions which the little mind of man is dreaming of in this world. Knowing this, who will cling to them desperately ? He knows that they will pass off like summer clouds. Then will arise true dispassion (*Vairagya*), when man frees himself from the thousand bonds of earthly attachments and connections.

To see the future in the present is Knowledge. The *Jiva* visualises death and the dissolution of the body in the present moment itself. He is then free from attachment, free from fear, free from the dualities of pleasure and pain etc. He realises that the Lord alone is the Immortal Reality. Thus he becomes a true devotee and yearns for immortality and the realisation of Truth.

Therefore let all aspirants see and understand the vision of Arjuna, and become truly dispassionate amidst the wonderful delusions of earthly life.

28\. यथा नदीनां बहवोऽम्बुवेगाः
समुद्रमेवाभिमुखा द्रवन्ति ।
तथा तवामी नरलोकवीरा
विशन्ति वक्त्राण्यभिविज्वलन्ति ॥ २८

Yatha nadinam bahavo'mbuvegah
samudram eva'bhimukha dravanti ।
tatha tava'mi naralokavira
visanti vaktranyabhivijvalanti ॥ 28

Meaning : यथा *yatha :* as, नदीनाम् *nadinam :* of rivers, बहवः *bahavah :* many, अम्बुवेगाः *ambuvegah :* water–currents, समुद्रम् एव *samudram eva :* verily to the ocean, अभिमुखाः *Abhimukhah :* towards, द्रवन्ति *dravanti :* flow, तथा *tatha :* so, अमी *ami :* these, नरलोकवीराः *naralokavirah :* warriors of the earth, अभिविज्वलन्ति *abhivijvalanti :* flaming, तव *tava :* Thy, वक्त्राणि *vaktrani :* mouths, विशन्ति *visanti :* enter.

Substance: As the innumerable water-currents of rivers flow verily to the ocean, so these warriors of the earth enter Thy flaming mouths.

29. यथा प्रदीप्तं ज्वलनं पतङ्गा
विशन्ति नाशाय समृद्धवेगाः।
तथैव नाशाय विशन्ति लोकास्तवापि
वक्त्राणि समृद्धवेगाः ॥ २९

Yatha pradiptam jvalanam patanga
visanti nasaya samriddhavegah ।
tathai'va nasaya visanti lokas
tava'pi vaktrani samriddhavegah । 29

Meaning: यथा *yatha:* as, पतङ्गाः *patangah:* moths, नाशाय *nasaya:* for destruction, समृद्धवेगाः *samriddhavegah:* with quickened speed, प्रदीप्तम् *pradiptam:* flaming, ज्वलनम् *jvalanam:* fire, विशन्ति *visanti:* enter, तथा *tatha:* so, एव *eva:* also, लोकाः *lokah:* the worlds, अपि *api:* even, समृद्धवेगाः *samriddhavegah:* with quickened speed, नाशाय *nasaya:* for destruction, तव *tava:* Thy, वक्त्राणि *vaktrani:* mouths, विशन्ति *visanti:* enter.

Substance: Just as moths for destruction rush into the flaming fire with quickened speed, so also these worlds rush into Thy flaming mouths for destruction with quickened speed.

30. लेलिह्यसे ग्रसमानः समन्ता
ल्लोकान्समग्रान्वदनैर्ज्वलद्भिः।
तेजोभिरापूर्य जगत्समग्रं
भासस्तवोग्राः प्रतपन्ति विष्णो ॥ ३०

Lelihyase grasamanah samantal
lokan samagran vadanair jvaladbhih ।
tejobhir apurya jagat samagram
bhasas tavo'grah pratapanti vishno । 30

Meaning: विष्णो *vishno:* O vishnu! ज्वलद्भिः *jvaladbhih:* with flaming, वदनैः *vadanaiah:* mouths, समग्रान् *samagran:* all, लोकान् *lokan:* the worlds (beings), समन्तात् *samantat:* on all sides, ग्रसमानः *grasamanah:* devouring, लेलिह्यसे *lelihyase:* you lick, तव *tava:* Thy, उग्राः *ugrah:* fierce, भासः *bhasah:* rays, तेजोभिः *tejobhih:* with radiance, जगत् समग्रम् *jagat samagran:* the whole universe, आपूर्य *apurya:* filling, प्रतपन्ति *pratapanti:* are burning.

Substance: O Vishnu! Devouring all the worlds on all sides with Thy flaming mouths, you lick; Thy fierce rays are burning with radiance filling the whole universe.

31. आख्याहि मे को भवानुग्ररूपो
नमोऽस्तु ते देववर प्रसीद।
विज्ञातुमिच्छामि भवन्तमाद्यं
न हि प्रजानामि तव प्रवृत्तिम् ॥ ३१

Akhyahi me ko bhavan ugrarupo
namo'stu te devavara prasida ।
vijnatum icchami bhavantam adyam
na hi prajanami tava pravrittim । 31

Meaning: देववर *devavara:* O God Supreme! उग्ररूपः *ugrarupah:* of fierce form, भवान् *bhavan:* Thou, कः *kah:* who, मे *me:* to me, आख्याहि *akhyahi:* say, हि *hi:* because, तव प्रवृत्तिम् *tavapravrittim:* Thy action, न प्रजानामि *na prajanami:* I do not know, आद्यम् *adyam:* Original Being, भवन्तम् *bhavantam:* Thee, विज्ञातुम् *vijnatum:* to know, इच्छामि *icchami:* I wish, ते *te:* to Thee, नमः *namah:* prostrations, अस्तु *astu:* be, प्रसीद *prasida:* show mercy.

Substance: Tell me who Thou art of fierce form; Salutations to Thee, O God Supreme! Have mercy. I know not Thy action; I wish to know Thee, the Original Being.

Commentary : The amazement of Arjuna on seeing the terrible Cosmic-Form devouring the whole universe, and the utter humility in praying to the Lord for mercy and illumination are the marks of true devotion. So should the devotee seek for the Lord's grace and mercy.

The Lord reveals who He is.

श्री भगवानुवाच

32. कालोऽस्मि लोकक्षयकृत्प्रवृद्धो
लोकान् समाहर्तुमिह प्रवृत्तः ।
ऋतेऽपि त्वा न भविष्यन्ति सर्वे
येऽवस्थिताः प्रत्यनीकेषु योधाः ॥ ३२

Sri Bhagavan uvacha

Kalo'smi lokakshayakrit pravriddho
lokan samahartum iha pravrittah ।
rite'pi tva na bhavisyanti sarve
ye'vasthitah pratyanikeshu yodhah ॥ 32

श्री भगवानुवाच *Sri Bhagavan Uvacha :* The Blessed Lord Said.

Meaning : लोकक्षयकृत् *lokakshayakrit :* world–destroying, प्रवृद्धः *pravriddhah :* mighty, कालः *kalah :* time, अस्मि *asmi:* I am लोकान् *lokan :* worlds, समाहर्तुम् *samahartum :* to destroy, इह *iha :* here, प्रवृत्तः *pravrittah :* engaged, प्रत्यनीकेषु *pratyanikeshu :* in the hostile armies, ये योधाः *ye yodhah :* these warriors, अवस्थिताः *avasthithah :* arrayed, सर्वे *sarve :* all, त्वा *tva :* you, ऋतेऽपि *rite pi :* even without, न भविष्यन्ति *na bhavishyanti :* shall not live.

Substance : The Blessed Lord said : I am Time, world-destroying and mighty, now engaged in destroying the worlds; even without you, these warriors in hostile armies shall not live.

33. तस्मात्त्वमुत्तिष्ठ यशो लभस्व
जित्वा शत्रून् भुङ्क्ष्व राज्यं समृद्धम् ।
मयैवैते निहताः पूर्वमेव
निमित्तमात्रं भव सव्यसाचिन् ॥ ३३

Tasmat tvam uttistha yaso labhasva
jitva satrun bhunkshva rajyam samriddham ।
mayai'vai'te nihatah purvam eva
nimittamatram bhava savyasachin ॥ 33

Meaning : तस्मात् *tasmat :* therefore, त्वम् *tvam :* you, उत्तिष्ठ *uttishtha :* stand up, शत्रून् *satrun :* enemies, जित्वा *jitva :* having conquered, यशः *yasah :* fame, लभस्व *labhasva :* obtain, समृद्धम् *samriddham :* unrivalled, राज्यम् *rajyam :* Kingdom, भुङ्क्ष्व *bhunkshva :* enjoy, एते *ete :* these, मया एव *maya eva :* even by Me, पूर्वम् *purvam :* already, एव *eva :* even, निहताः *nihatah :* destroyed, निमित्तमात्रम् भव *nimittamatram bhava :* a mere instrument be, सव्यसाचिन् *savyasachin :* O Arjuna !

Substance : Therefore, stand up and obtain glory ! Conquer the enemies, and enjoy unrivalled Kingdom; verily, by Me they have already been slain; be you a mere instrument, O Arjuna !

Commentary : *Nimittamatram :* The Lord commands Arjuna to fight and obtain the Kingdom of glory. But He makes it clear that Arjuna is nothing more than a mere instrument in the inexorable scheme of Time, carrying out the will of God by whom all the enemy armies have already been destroyed. (*Mayaivaite nihatah purvam eva*). The very cause of Arjuna's grief is the deluded feeling that he is the doer, and that he is to kill his relations and friends.

The Lord now reveals to him that he is not the slayer, but that the Lord in the Cosmic Form of Time, has already destroyed them, and that Arjuna is to be merely an instrument. It is the greatest secret to know that man is not really the doer. The

sense of doership is the cause of bondage. (*ahamkaravimudhatma kartahamiti manyate* 3-27). It is the Lord with His inscrutable power of *Maya*, that does every thing. Knowing this the wise man is not deluded. By giving up the thought of doership, man releases himself from the bondage of *Karma* and attains the liberated state.

Savyasachin : Arjuna was capable of using the arrows with his left hand also.

34. द्रोणं च भीष्मं च जयद्रथं च
कर्णं तथान्यानपि योधवीरान् ।
मया हतांस्त्वं जहि मा व्यथिष्ठा
युध्यस्व जेतासि रणे सपत्नान् ॥ ३४

Dronam cha bhismam cha jayadratham cha
karnam tatha'nyan api yodhaviran ।
maya hatamstvam jahi ma vyathistha
yudhyasva jetasi rane sapatnan ॥ 34

Meaning : मया *maya* : by Me, हतान् *hatan* : slain already, द्रोणम् च *dronam cha* : and Drona, भीष्मं च *bhishmamcha* : and Bhishma, जयद्रथम् च *jayadrathamcha* : and Jayadratha, कर्णं *karnam* : Karna, तथा *tatha* : so also, अन्यान् *anyan* : others, योधवीरान् *yodhaviran* : brave warriors, अपि *api* : even, त्वम् *tvam* : you, जहि *jahi* : do kill, मा व्यथिष्ठाः *ma vyadhishthah* : do not be distressed with fear, युध्यस्व *yudhyasva* : fight, रणे *rane* : in the battle, सपत्नान् *sapatnan* : the enemies, जेतासि *jetasi* : you shall conquer.

Substance : Drona, Bhishma, Jayadratha, Karna and other brave warriors–these have already been slain by Me; you do kill them; be not distressed with fear; fight and you shall conquer the enemies.

Commentary : *Ma vyadhisthah* : "Do not fear". This again is the *Mahamantra* of the Gita,-a single word into which the essence of the Gita is distilled. Fearlessness, courage, spirit of action,-these are taught in the Gita as the main doctrines of life. Having surrendered every thing to the Lord, having understood that He is the real actor in this wonderful drama of life, why should man fear, when he is working as a mere instrument in the hands of God ? Self-surrender and righteous action cannot have the seeds of fear in them. Therefore the Lord exhorts Arjuna to carry out his duty without any fear. In daily life man is caught in fearful circumstances, and confronted with formidable obstacles. Every one knows this. In such moments, if the Lord's exhortation is remembered, man is inspired with a higher power which will enable him to overcome all the obstacles in the way. No one should give up his duty out of fear. "*Yudhyasva*" (fight)–that is what the Lord wants every one to do, according to his status in life. The duties of life are prescribed for all, and each man has to perform them without fear or cowardice. The word '*jetasi*' (you shall conquer) declares victory as the fruit of action. Thus, if a man surrenders himself to the Lord, and fights the battle of life righteously, he is sure to obtain victory. Where Sri Krishna is, there is victory.

Though Bhishma and others are still alive, the Lord declares them to be 'already dead' (*hatah*). What does this mean ? In the 27th verse, the secret has been revealed. The Lord is Time, not time as we see it divided into past, present and future, but Eternity in which there cannot be any of these divisions manufacturered by the limited mind of man. The past, present and future are one in Eternal Time. So the future of man is easily foreseeable by the divine vision. So the enemy warriors are dead already, killed by the Lord, in the Cosmic aspect of Time. Man should learn a great lesson from this. He will find that what he is considering worthy and pleasant, all the relations and friends, all the treasures and loves and hatreds, are already dead and gone, though appearing to live. Death then loses its power over the wise man who regards everything as entering the blazing mouths of the Cosmic Form. The worlds are also dead and gone. Why then this clinging to a little bit of flesh ? Why then weep and wail for the loss of this or that ? Time takes away all. Nay, it is all taken away already. Thus

knowing, the wise man is not deluded. Renunciation (*Vairagya*) comes to him spontaneously. Lord Buddha thought of this inevitable sequence of human life, and was inspired to find out that, which does not die in the midst of death ? That question comes to all at one time or other. The answer also comes in due course. The Self of man is beyond death. Realising the Self–*Atma*, man is freed from the shadow of death. He acquires immortality in the Lord.

Sanjaya now reports what Arjuna did afterwards.

सञ्जय उवाच

35. एतच्छ्रुत्वा वचनं केशवस्य
कृताञ्जलिर्वेपमानः किरीटी ।
नमस्कृत्वा भूय एवाह कृष्णं
सगद्गदं भीतभीतः प्रणम्य ॥ ३५

Samjaya uvacha

Etachrutva vachanam kesavasya
kritanjolir vepamanah kiriti ।
namaskritva bhuya eva'ha krishnam
sagadgadam bhitabhitah pranamya ॥ 35

सञ्जय उवाच *Sanjaya uvacha :* Sanjaya said.

Meaning: किरीटी *kiriti :* Arjuna, केशवस्य *kesavasya :* of Krishna, एतत् *etat :* this, वचनम् *vachanam :* word, श्रुत्वा *srutva :* having heard, वेपमानः *vepamanah :* trembling, कृताञ्जलिः *kritanjalih :* joining the palms, कृष्णम् *krishnam :* to Krishna, नमस्कृत्वा *namaskritva :* having bowed down, भीतभीतः *bhitabhitah:* overwhelmed with fear, प्रणम्य *pranamya :* prostrating, सगद्गदम् *sagadgadam :* in a choked voice, भूयः एव *bhuyah eva :* also again, आह *aha :* spoke (thus).

Substance : Sanjaya said :– Having heard that speech of Kesava, the crowned one (Arjuna), with joined palms, trembling,

prostrating himself, again addressed Krishna, in a choked voice, bowing down, overwhelmed with fear.

Commentary : The perfect devotion of Arjuna is revealed here. His adoration, his humility, his sense of fear in the Mighty Presence, his prostrations and salutations in various ways, show how devotion expresses itself in the heart of a man who has surrendered himself to the Lord.

The following eleven verses are Arjuna's prayer to the Lord.

अर्जुन उवाच

36. स्थाने हृषीकेश तव प्रकीर्त्या
जगत्प्रहृष्यत्यनुरज्यते च ।
रक्षांसि भीतानि दिशो द्रवन्ति
सर्वे नमस्यन्ति च सिद्धसङ्घाः ॥ ३६

Arjuna uvacha

Sthane hrisikesa tava prakirtya
jagat prahrisyatyanurajyate cha ।
rakshamsi bhitani diso dravanti
sarve namasyanti cha siddhasamghah ॥ 36

अर्जुन उवाच *Arjuna uvacha :* Arjuna said.

Meaning : हृषीकेश *hrishikesa :* O Krishna ! तव *tava :* Thy, प्रकीर्त्या *prakirtya :* with (Thy) praise (the utterance of Thy name, power and greatness), जगत् *jagat :* the universe, प्रहृष्यति *prahrishyati :* is delighted, अनुरज्यते च *anurajyate cha :* and rejoices, रक्षांसि *rakshamsi :* the Rakshasas, भीतानि *bhitani :* in fear, दिशः *disah :* to all quarters, द्रवन्ति *dravanti :* fly, सर्वे सिद्धसङ्घाः *sarve siddhasamghah :* all the hosts of Siddhas, नमस्यन्ति च *namasyanti cha :* and bow to Thee, स्थाने *sthane :* it is meet.

Substance: Arjuna said: It is but meet, O Krishna! that the world delights and rejoices in thy praise; the *Rakshasas* fly in fear to all quarters; and all the hosts of Siddhas bow to thee.

Commentary: *Tava prakirtya*: The world is delighted and great joy fills the heart of the devotee by thinkimg and speaking of the wonderful glory, power and grandeur of the Lord. The whole universe is His; nay, He is Himself the whole universe. What wonderful manifestation of His inscrutable, mystic, mysterious Power! (*Yogamaisvaram*). To utter His name, to contemplate His Glory is the source of True joy for the world. The devotees who thus spend their life in divinity are indeed blessed.

Rakshamsi: The *Rakshasas* fly to all quarters in fear. Where the Lord is manifesting there cannot exist the *tamasic* and *Asuric* forces. It also means that *kama* and *krodha*, the eternal enemies of mankind, cannot corrupt and pollute the heart of a true devotee. They fly in fear.

Siddhasamghah: The *Sattvic* forces find strength and joy in the presence of the Lord. They bow down to Him.

It is said that this verse contains many '*bijaksharams*', and so by repeating it a prescribed number of times, all evil spirits that harass mankind are deterred and driven away.

37. कस्माच्च ते न नमेरन्महात्मन्
गरीयसे ब्रह्मणोऽप्यादिकर्त्रे ।
अनन्त देवेश जगन्निवास
त्वमक्षरं सदसत्तत्परं यत् ॥ ३७

Kasmaccha te na nameran mahatman
gariyase brahmano'pyadikartre ।
ananta devesa jagannivasa
tvam aksharam sad asat tat param yat ॥ 37

Meaning: महात्मन् *mahatman*: O Great Lord! अनन्त *ananta*: O Infinite Lord! देवेश *devesa*: Supreme God!

जगन्निवास *jagannivasa*: Abode of the universe! सत् *sat*: Being, असत् च *asat cha*: and non-being, यत् *yat*: which, तत् *tat*: that (Thou art), परम् *param*: Supreme, अक्षरम् *aksharam*: Imperishable, त्वम् *tvam*: Thou, ब्रह्मणः अपि *brahmanah api*: of even Brahma (creator), आदिकर्त्रे *adikartre*: the primal cause, गरीयसे *gariyase*: greater (than all), ते *te*: thy, कस्मात् *kasma*: why, न नमेरन् *na nameran*: not they prostrate.

Substance: O Great Lord! And why should not they bow down to Thee, greater (than all), of Brahma even, the primal cause, O Infinite Lord! Lord of Gods! Abode of the Universe! Thou art the Imperishable, being and non-being, and what is Supreme, (higher than *Sat* and *Asat*) that Thou art.

Commentary: *Sadasat tatparam*: *Paramatma* is distinct from *Sat* and *Asat*. *Sat* means the world of matter (*sthula jagat*) and *Asat* the subtle world of mind (*sukshma jagat*). *Paramatma* is distinct from both. Or, *Sat* may be taken to mean 'mind' and *Asat* the 'body'. Thus taken also, we get the same idea. From the standpoint of *Paramatma*, both the physical and mental worlds do not exist. *Paramatma* alone is. Therefore it is declared here that He is distinct from both. He is the Supreme.

Question: *What is the nature of Paramatma?*

Answer: He is Supreme, Primal cause of Brahma, Infinite, Lord of Gods, abode of the Universe, Imperishable, distinct from body and mind.

38. त्वमादिदेवः पुरुषः पुराण
स्त्वमस्य विश्वस्य परं निधानम् ।
वेत्तासि वेद्यं च परं च धाम
त्वया ततं विश्वमनन्तरूप ॥ ३८

Tvam adidevah purushah puranas
tvamasya visvasya param nidhanam ।
vetta'si vedyam cha param cha dhama
tvaya tatam visvam ananta rupa ॥ 38

Meaning : अनन्तरूप *anantarupa :* O Lord of Infinite Form, त्वम् *tvam :* Thou, आदिदेवः *adidevah :* the Primal God, पुराणः *puranah :* the Ancient, पुरुषः *purushah :* Purusha, अस्य विश्वस्य *asya visvasya :* of this Universe, परम् *param :* Supreme, निधानम् *nidhanam :* refuge, वेत्ता *vetta :* knower, वेद्यम् च *vedyam cha :* and that which is to be known, परं च धाम *param cha dhama :* and Supreme Abode, त्वम् *tvam :* Thou, असि *asi :* (thou) art, त्वया *tvaya :* by thee, विश्वम् *visvam :* the Universe, ततम् *tatam :* is pervaded.

Substance : Thou art the first of the Gods, most Ancient *Purusha*; Thou art the supreme receptacle of all that lives; Thou art the knower and known, the Abode Supreme; by Thee the Universe is pervaded, O Thou of Cosmic-Form !

Question : *How is Paramatma further described ?*

Answer : He is (1) First of the Gods, (2) Ancient Purusha, (3) the foundation of the world, (4) Omniscient, (5) that which is to be known, (6) Supreme Abode, (7) Pervading the whole world, (8) Infinite in Form.

39. वायुर्यमोऽग्निर्वरुणः शशाङ्कः
प्रजापतिस्त्वं प्रपितामहश्च ।
नमो नमस्तेऽस्तु सहस्रकृत्वः
पुनश्च भूयोऽपि नमो नमस्ते ॥ ३९

Vayur yamo'gnir varunah sasankah
prajapatistvam prapitamahas cha ।
namo namaste'stu sahasrakritvah
punas cha bhuyo'pi namo namaste ॥ 39

Meaning : वायुः *vayuh:* Vayu, यमः *yamah:* Yama, अग्निः *agnih:* Agni, वरुणः *varunah :* Varuna, शशाङ्कः *sasankah :* Moon, प्रजापतिः *prajapathi :* Prajapati, प्रपितामहः च *prapitamah cha :* and great grandsire, त्वम् *tvam :* Thou (art), ते *te :* to Thee, सहस्रकृत्वः *sahasra kritvah :* thousand times, नमो नमः *namo–namah :* salutations, अस्तु *astu :* be, ते *te :* to Thee, पुनः च *punah cha :* and again, नमः *namah :* salutations, भूयः अपि *bhuyah api :* also again, नमः *namah :* salutations.

Substance : Thou art Vayu, Yama, Agni, Varuna, the Moon, Prajapati, and great grandsire of all; salutations, salutations to thee again and again, and once again salutations, a thousand times salutations unto Thee !

Commentary : Such ecstatic devotion is essential for all aspirants to God-realisation.

40. नमः पुरस्तादथ पृष्ठतस्ते
नमोऽस्तु ते सर्वत एव सर्व ।
अनन्तवीर्यामितविक्रमस्त्वं
सर्वं समाप्नोषि ततोऽसि सर्वः ॥ ४०

Namah purastad atha pristhataste
namo'stu te sarvata eva sarva ।
ananta viryamita vikramas tvam
sarvam samapnoshi tato'si sarvah ॥ 40

Meaning : सर्व *sarva :* O All, पुरस्तात् *purastat ,* before, पृष्ठतः *pristhatah :* behind, ते *te :* to Thee, नमः *namah :* salutations, अथ *atha :* also, सर्वतः *sarvatah :* on every side, एव *eva :* even, ते *te :* unto Thee, नमः *namah :* salutations, अस्तु *astu :* be, अनन्तवीर्यामित विक्रमः *anantaviryah amita vikramah:* boundless in power, measureless in strength, त्वम् *tvam :* Thou, सर्वम् *sarvam :* all, समाप्नोषि *samapnoshi :* pervadest (Thou), ततः *tatah :* wherefore, सर्वः *sarvah :* all, असि *asi :* Thou (art).

Substance : Salutations to Thee before and behind; Salutations to Thee on all sides; O All ! boundless in power and measureless in strength, Thou art pervading all, wherefore Thou art all !!

Commentary : The Lord's power is Infinite ! Who can measure Him ? If we can use our eyes and look around day or night, we can get a faint glimpse of the infinite extension of the Lord's power. The man of science is discovering infinitisimal fragment of His Divine power. The more powerful tellescopes reveal more and more of the immeasurable star-worlds on all sides. The more powerful microscopes reveal infinitisimally smaller and smaller beings everywhere. So the Lord is greater than the greatest, larger than the largest, smaller than the smallest. What is man before the Divine ! Man's attempt to know God's power is just like an ant's attempt to fathom the depth of the ocean !

Man can use a fan for a whiff of breeze; God can cause a tempest ! Man can light a lamp to illumine a room, God can send forth the Sun to illumine the earth and sky ! Man can dig a well for water, God can plunge the world in a deluge, making miles around vast sheets of water ! Man can shoot a rocket into space ! God can shoot stars and planets into space. What is man's power before God's ! The rational man knows that he is nothing before God. His ego vanishes that very moment, and he prostrates himself before God, as Arjuna did in this situation. It is only the blind, little-minded, deluded men who boast of their power and position. Man grows and evolves, as his eyes are cleared of the cataract. He realises gradually the Infinity in which he is placed–Infinity before and behind; Infinity in the past and future; Infinity everywhere ! The little human being discovers the Infinite, he becomes the Infinite; contemplating the Divine, he becomes the Divine, Delusion vanishes, Man realises the Self.

The devotee sees the Lord everywhere, manifesting His inscrutable and mysterious power in a miraculous manner. He bows before Him, prostrates himself before Him, offers his adoration and worship, and thus thinking of the Lord he attains the Supreme.

Question : *How is Paramatma described further ?*

Answer : He is infinite in power, He pervades all, He is the Cosmic-Form.

41. सखेति मत्वा प्रसभं यदुक्तं
हे कृष्ण हे यादव हे सखेति ।
अजानता महिमानं तवेदं
मया प्रमादात् प्रणयेन वापि ॥ ४१

42. यच्चापहासार्थमसत्कृतोऽसि
विहारशय्यासनभोजनेषु ।
एकोऽथवाप्यच्युत तत्समक्षं
तत्क्षामये त्वामहमप्रमेयम् ॥ ४२

Sakhe'ti matva prasabham yad uktam
he krishna he yadava he sakhe'ti ।
ajanata mahimanam tave'dam
maya pramadat pranayena va'pi ॥ 41

Yaccha'pahasartham asatkrito'si
vihara sayyasana bhojaneshu ।
eko'thava'pyachyuta tat samaksham
tat kshamaye tvam aham aprameyam ॥ 42

Meaning : अच्युत *achyuta* : O Krishna ! तव *tava* : Thy, इद *idam* : this, महिमानम् *mahimanam* : greatness, अजानता *ajanata* : not knowing, मया *maya* : by me, प्रमादात् *pramadat* : by carelessness, प्रणयेन वापि *pranayena vapi* : or even due to love, सखा इति *sakha iti* : as friend, मत्वा *matva* : regarding (Thee), हे कृष्ण *he Krishna* : O Krishna, हे यादव *he yadava* : O Yadava, हे सखा *he sakha* : O Friend, इति *iti* : thus, प्रसभम् *prasabham* : presumptuously, यत् *yat* : whatever, उक्तम् *uktam* : spoken by me, विहार शयया आसन भोजनेषु *viharasayyasanabhojneshu* : while at play, or on bed, while sitting or at meals, एकः *ekah* : (when) one, अथवा *athava* : or, तत् *tat* : that, समक्षम् *samaksham* : the company, अपि *api* : even, अपहासार्थम् *apahasartham* : for the sake of fun, असत्कृतः

asatkritah : disrespected, असि *asi :* Thou art, यत् च *yat cha :* and whatever, तत् *tat :* that, अप्रमेयम् *aprameyam :* Immeasurable ! त्वाम् *tvam :* Thou, अहम् *aham :* I, क्षामये *kshamaye :* implore to forgive.

Substance : Whatever I presumptuously spoke from carelessness or even affection addressing Thee as 'O Krishna, O Yadava, O Sakha ! considering Thee as a friend only, not knowing this Thy greatness, in whatever way I may have disrespected Thee for the sake of fun, while at play, resting, sitting, or at meals, when alone in company with Thee–all that I implore Thee to forgive, O Thou Immeasurable One !

43\. पितासि लोकस्य चराचरस्य
त्वमस्य पूज्यश्च गुरुर्गरीयान् ।
न त्वत्समोऽस्त्यभ्यधिकः कुतोऽन्यो
लोकत्रयेऽप्यप्रतिमप्रभाव ॥ ४३

Pita'si lokasya characharasya
tvam asya pujyas cha gurur gariyan ।
na tvatsamo'styabhyadhikah kuto'nyo
lokatraye'pyapratima prabhava । 43

Meaning : अप्रतिम प्रभाव *apratamaprabhava :* O God of unequalled power ! त्वम् *tvam :* Thou, चराचरस्य *characharasya :* of the moving and the unmoving, अस्य लोकस्य *asya lokasya :* of this world, पिता *pita :* father, असि *asi :* art, च *cha :* and, अस्य *asya :* of this, पूज्यः *pujyah :* revered, गरीयान् *gariyan :* weightier, गुरुः *guruh :* teacher, लोकत्रये अपि *lokatraye api :* even in the three worlds, त्वत् समः *tvat samah :* equal to Thee, न अस्ति *na asti:* is not, अभ्यधिकः *abhyadhikah :* surpassing Thee, अन्यः *anyah :* another, कुतः *kutah :* whence.

Substance : Thou art the father of this world, the moving and the unmoving; Thou art the great *Guru*; equal to

Thee, there is none; whence another higher than Thee in the three worlds ? O God of unequalled power !

Commentary : The Lord has already declared that He is the Father, Mother, Grandsire, of the universe. Arjuna understands the truth now, and worships the Lord as Father and *Guru.* He is the highest *Guru*, the *Guru* of *Gurus*, the Universal Master (*Jagadguru*). The Lord is the only reality, and all else is '*asat*' non-existing illusion. This being so, how can there be anything equal or greater than the Lord ? He is the final refuge for all beings.

Question : *How is Paramatma further described ?*

Answer : He is the father of the world, the most revered, the highest *Guru*, of incomparable power in all the worlds, having none equal or superior.

44\. तस्मात्प्रणम्य प्रणिधाय कायं
प्रसादये त्वामहमीशमीड्यम् ।
पितेव पुत्रस्य सखेव सख्युः
प्रियः प्रियायार्हसि देव सोढुम् ॥ ४४

Tasmat pranamya pranidhaya kayam
prasadaye tvam aham isam idyam ।
pite'va putrasya sakhe'va sakhyuh
priyah priyaya'rhasi deva sodhum ॥ 44

Meaning : तस्मात् *tasmat :* therefore, कायम् *kayam :* body, अहम् *aham :* I, प्रणिधाय *pranidhaya :* having bent, प्रणम्य *pranamya :* saluting, ईशम् *isam :* the Lord, ईड्यम् *idyam :* the Adorable, त्वाम् *tvam :* thee, प्रसादये *prasadaye :* crave forgiveness, देव *deva :* O God, पुत्रस्य *putrasya :* of the son, पिता इव *pita iva :* like father, सख्युः *sakhyuh :* of the friend, सखा इव *sakha iva :* like friend, प्रियायाः *priyayah :* to the beloved, प्रियः *priyah :* lover, सोढुम् *sodhum :* bear, अर्हसि *arhasi :* thou shouldst.

Substance : O God ! Therefore bowing down and prostrating I crave Thee forgiveness; like father the son, like friend the friend, like lover the beloved, Thou shouldst forgive me, O Adorable Lord !

Commentary : *Pranidhayakayam* : The manner of prostration before elders, *Gurus* and God, is described here. The whole body should touch the earth. This is '*Sashtangavandanam*'. By this, the intractable ego, feeding itself on pride and presumption, is killed. As the ego flourishes by identity with the body, the way to destroy it is by throwing down the body before elders, *Gurus* and God. Arjuna did so and received God's grace, Sage Visvamitra prostrated himself before Vasishtha and became a Brahmarshi.

Arjuna had a glimpse of the infinite majesty, power and Glory of the Lord. Himself a warrior of might and repute in the world, he now fully realises that he is less than straw before the mighty Lord. The '*durahankara*' that agitates man is nothing else but '*avidya*', and it functions by making man blind to the infinity that surrounds him and in which he exists just like the bubble in the ocean· How would we look upon the bubble if it feels proud of its power and glamour ! We laugh at the silly little thing, knowing that its glamour is only for a second, that it will break and dissolve in the ocean. So would man think of himself when wisdom dawns on him. The infinitude of the Lord and the utter littleness of man is realised by the aspirant by contemplating the Glory of that mighty Being. The *Vibhuti Yoga* and *Viswarupa Sandarsana Yoga* serve the purpose of destroying the little 'I' and raising man to the plane of Divine Glory. The ecstatic adoration of Arjuna touches the peak point here. May all people rise to that plane ! May all receive God's grace !

Question : *How is the Lord further described ?*

Answre : He is the ruler and the Lord of the world. He is the most revered of all.

Question : *How should man show respect to elders, God and Gurus ?*

Answer : He should prostrate himself before them with true devotion and humility.

45. अदृष्टपूर्वं हृषितोऽस्मि दृष्ट्वा
भयेन च प्रव्यथितं मनो मे।
तदेव मे दर्शय देव रूपं
प्रसीद देवेश जगन्निवास ॥ ४५

Adristapurvam hrishito'smi dristva
bhayena cha pravyathitam mano me ।
tad eva me darsaya deva rupam
prasida devesa jagannivasa । 45

Meaning : अदृष्टपूर्वम् *adrishtapurvam :* not seen before (this Cosmic–Form), दृष्ट्वा *drishtva :* having seen, हृषितः *hrishitah :* delighted, अस्मि *asmi :* (I) am, च *cha :* and, मे *me :* my, मनः *manah :* mind, भयेन *bhayena :* with fear, प्रव्यथितम् *pravyathitam* : is distressed, देव *deva :* O God ! तत् रूपम् एव *tat rupam eva :* that form only (pleasing), मे *me :* to me, दर्शय *darsaya :* show, देवेश *devesa :* Lord of Gods ! जगन्निवास *jagannivasa :* Abode of the world ! प्रसीद *prasida :* have mercy.

Substance : Having seen what was never seen before (the Cosmic-Form), I am delighted and yet my mind with fear is distressed; show me that former form only. O God ! Have mercy, O Lord of Gods ! abode of the Universe !

Commentary : Arjuna was delighted and at the same time struck with terror by the Cosmic-Form of the Lord. The full manifestation of the Lord should be terrifying indeed, when the Lord appears as Time, the Destroyer. Even Arjuna was fear-struck and distressed. So he wishes to see the Lord in His former pleasing form.

Prasida : In the 25th verse, Arjuna makes the same appeal.

Tadeva rupam : Some interpret the words to mean the four-armed form of Vishnu.

Arjuna declares the form that he wishes to see.

46. किरीटिनं गदिनं चक्रहस्त
मिच्छामि त्वां द्रष्टुमहं तथैव
तेनैव रूपेण चतुर्भुजेन
सहस्रबाहो भव विश्वमूर्ते ॥ ४६

Kiritinam gadinam chakrahastam
icchami tvam drashtum aham tathai'va ।
tenai'va rupena chaturbhujena
sahasrabaho bhava visvamurte ॥ 46

Meaning : अहम् *aham :* I, त्वाम् *tvam :* Thee, तथा एव *tatha eva :* as formerly, किरीटिनम् *kiritinam :* with Crown, गदिनम् *gadinam :* bearing the mace, चक्रहस्तम् *chakrahastam :* with discus in the hand, द्रष्टुम् *drashtum:* to see, इच्छामि *icchami:* (I) wish, सहस्रबाहो *sahasra baho :* O thousand-armed, विश्वमूर्ते *visvamurte :* O Universal Form! चतुर्भुजेन *chaturbhujena :* with four arms, तेन रूपेण एव *tena rupena eva :* that form only, भव *bhava :* be.

Substance : I desire to see Thee as before, with crown, mace, and discuss in Thy former four-armed form only. Appear, O Thousand-armed ! O Universal Form !

Commentary : A question arises in this verse. When Arjuna says, "*tenaiva rupena chaturbhujena,*" it is implied that he has seen this delightful form before ? If so, when did he see this form ? It appears from his imploring the Lord to forgive him for any word or act of disrespect to Him, that he has not formerly realised the Divinity of the Lord, but regarded him as a friend and relation. This contradiction can be reconciled in the following way.

(1) Before the Lord revealed His Cosmic-Form, He should have shown the four-armed form of Vishnu. In the 50th verse; it is said that the Lord appeared again in His normal form, (*bhuyah svakam rupam darsyamasa*), and also that the Lord appeared in His gentle form (*punah saumyavapur' mahatma*). Thus we come to know that the Lord had shown the four-armed form of Vishnu just before he assumed the Visvarupa.

(2) Arjuna might have heard that when the Lord was born to Devaki, He appeared in the form of Vishnu with Discuss, Conch and Crown etc.

(3) By seeing the Cosmic-Form, Arjuna realises that he is no other than the Supreme Lord Vishnu who rules Vaikunta, in His delightful form.

The Lord declares the might of the Cosmic Form before He assumes His normal Form.

श्री भगवानुवाच

47. मया प्रसन्नेन तवार्जुनेदं
रूपं परं दर्शितमात्मयोगात् ।
तेजोमयं विश्वमनन्तमाद्यं
यन्मे त्वदन्येन न दृष्टपूर्वम् ॥ ४७

Sri Bhagavan uvacha

Maya prasannena tava'rjune'dam
rupam param darsitam atmayogat ।
tejomayam visvam anantam adyam
yan me tvad anyena na dristapurvam ॥ 47

श्री भगवानुवाच *Sri Bhagavan Uvacha :* Sri Bhagavan said.

Meaning : अर्जुन *Arjuna :* O Arjuna, तेजोमयम् *tejomayam:* mass of radiance, विश्वम् *visvam :* the universal form, अनन्तम् *anantam :* endless, आद्यम् *adyam:* primal, त्वत् अन्येन *tvad anyena:* by no one other than you, न दृष्टपूर्वम् *na drishtvapurvam :* not seen before, मे *me:* My, यत् इदम् परम् रूपम् *yat idam param rupam:* what this supreme form, तत् *tat :* that (Cosmic-Form), प्रसन्नेन मया *prasannena maya :* by my grace, तव *tava :* to you,

आत्मयोगात् *atmayogat:* by My Soveriegn Yoga, दर्शितम् *darsitam:* was revealed.

Substance: The Blessed Lord said: O Arjuna! This Supreme Form was shown to you graciously by me by My Soveriegn yoga,-full of radiance, primeval, infinite, universal form, which has never been seen before by any one other than you.

Commentary: *Maya prasannena*: It is clear that the Lord showers His grace on his devotees who worship Him with single-minded devotion.

Question: *What is the nature of the Lord?*

Answer : He is radiant, all-pervasive, infinite and primeval.

48. न वेदयज्ञाध्ययनैर्न दानै र्न
च क्रियाभिर्न तपोभिरुग्रैः ।
एवं रूपः शक्य अहं नृलोके
द्रष्टुं त्वदन्येन कुरुप्रवीर ॥ ४८

Na vedayajnadhyayanair na danair
na cha kriyabhir na tapobhir ugraih ।
evam rupah sakya aham nriloke
drashtum tvad anyena kurupravira ॥ 48

Meaning: कुरुप्रवीर *kurupravira:* Hero of the Kurus, O Arjuna! एवम् रूपम् *evam rupam:* in this form, अहम् *aham:* I, नृलोके *nriloke:* in the world of men, त्वदन्येन *tvadanyena:* by any other than you, वेदयज्ञाध्ययनैः *vedayajnadhyayanaiah:* with Vedic study, yajnas, study of the scripture, द्रष्टुम् *drashtum:* to see, न शक्यः *na sakyah:* is not possible, दानैः *danaih:* with charity, न *na:* not (possible to see), क्रियाभिः *kriyabhih:* with rites and rituals (Agnihotra, Srauta, Smarta), न *na:* not (possible to see), उग्रैः तपोभिः च *ugraih tapobhih cha:* and with severe austerities, न *na:* not (possible to see).

Substance: O Arjuna, hero of the Kurus! This Cosmic Form of mine, no one other than you has seen in the world of men (by My grace you have seen It); and it is impossible to see Me in this Form, by Vedic study, by sacrifices, by rites and rituals, and even by terrible austerities.

Commentary: It should not be misunderstood that Vedic study, *yajnas* and other rites and rituals prescribed in the *Sastras* are all useless. Without devotion to the Lord, these acts do not yield the highest results. Austerity by itself cannot lead to God-realisation without devotion *(Bhakti)*. Whatever may be the efforts unless the field is watered, there is no harvest. So also the works of men bear no fruit without devotion.

49. मा ते व्यथा मा च विमूढभावो
दृष्ट्वा रूपं घोरमीदृङ्ममेदम् ।
व्यपेतभीः प्रीतमनाः पुनस्त्वं
तदेव मे रूपमिदं प्रपश्य ॥ ४९

Ma te vyatha ma cha vimudhabhavo
dristva rupam ghoram idrin mame'dam ।
vyapetabhih pritamanah punas tvam
tad eva me rupam idam prapasya ॥ 49

Meaning: ईदृक् *idrik:* such, घोरम् *ghoram:* terrible, मम *mama:* My, इदंरूपम् *idam rupam:* this Cosmic Form, दृष्ट्वा *drishtva:* having seen, ते *te:* to you, व्यथा मा *vyatha ma:* distress be not, विमूढ भावः च मा *vimudhabhavah cha:* and bewildered state be not, त्वम् *tvam:* you, व्यपेतभीः *vyapetabhih:* free from fear, प्रीतमनाः *pritamanah:* of gladdened heart, मे *me:* My, तत् इदं रूपम् *tat idam rupam:* that this (former) form (you wish to see), एव *eva:* only, पुनः *punah:* again, प्रपश्य *prapasya:* behold.

Substance: Having seen this My Cosmic Form, do not be fearstruck and bewildered in mind; free from fear and with gladdened heart, behold again this former form (that you wish to see).

Sanjaya now narrates what the Lord did afterwards.

सञ्जय उवाच

50\. इत्यर्जुनं वासुदेवस्तथोक्त्वा
स्वकं रूपं दर्शयामास भूयः ।
आश्वासयामास च भीतमेनं
भूत्वा पुनः सौम्यवपुर्महात्मा ॥ ५०

Samjaya uvacha

Ityarjunam vasudevas tatho'ktva
svakam rupam darsayam asa'bhuyah ।
asvasayam asa cha bhitam enam
bhutva punah saumyavapur mahatma ॥ 50

सञ्जय उवाच *Sanjaya uvacha :* Sanjaya said.

Meaning : इति *iti :* thus, वासुदेवः *vasudevah :* Krishna, अर्जुनम् *arjunam :* to Arjuna, उक्त्वा *uktva :* having spoken, तथा *tatha :* so, स्वकं रूपम् *svakam rupam :* His own form, भूयः *bhuyah :* again, दर्शयामास *darsyamasa :* showed, महात्मा *mahatma:* the great-souled Lord, पुनः च *punah cha :* and again, सौम्यवपुः *saumyavapuh :* gracious form, भूत्वा *bhutva :* having taken, भीतम् *bhitam :* terrified, एनम् *enam :* Arjuna, आश्वासयामास *asvasayamasa :* consoled.

Substance : Sanjaya said : (O King Dhritarashtra !)—the Lord having thus spoken to Arjuna showed His gracious form again; and the great-souled Lord, having assumed His graceful form, consoled the terror-struck Arjuna.

Commentary : It is twice said here that the Lord showed His gracious form-the first may be the four-armed form of Vishnu, and the second may be the human form of Krishna, the Charioteer.

Arjuna speaks to Krishna.

अर्जुन उवाच

51\. दृष्ट्वेदं मानुषं रूपं तव सौम्यं जनार्दन ।
इदानीमस्मि संवृत्तः सचेताः प्रकृतिं गतः ॥ ५१

Arjuna uvacha

Dristve'dam manusham rupam tava saumyam janardana ।
idanim asmi samvrittah sachetah prakritim gatah ॥ 51

अर्जुन उवाच *Arjuna uvacha :* Arjuna said.

Meaning : जनार्दन *janardana :* O Krishna ! तव *tava :* Thy, सौम्यम् *saumyam :* graceful, इदं मानुषंरूपम् *idam manusham rupam :* the human form, दृष्ट्वा *drishtva :* having seen, इदानीम् *idanim :* now, सचेताः *sachetah :* of untroubled mind, संवृत्तः *samvrittah :* (I) have become, प्रकृतिम् *prakritim :* (my) natural state, गतः अस्मि *gatah asmi :* (I) have attained.

Substance : Arjuna said : O Krishna ! having seen Thy graceful human form, my mind has become calm and untroubled and I have attained my natural state.

The Lord explains the greatness of the Cosmic Form which Arjuna had seen.

श्री भगवानुवाच

52\. सुदुर्दर्शमिदं रूपं दृष्टवानसि यन्मम ।
देवा अप्यस्य रूपस्य नित्यं दर्शनकाङ्क्षिणः ॥ ५२

Sri Bhagavan uvacha

Sudurdarsam idam rupam dristavanasi yanmama ।
deva apyasya rupasya nityam darsana kankshinah ॥ 52

श्री भगवानुवाच *Sri Bhaghavan Uvacha :* The blessed Lord said.

Meaning : मम *mama :* My, यत् *yat :* what (form), दृष्टवान् असि *drishtvan asi :* you have seen, इदं रूपम् (*tat*) *idam rupam :* this Cosmic-form, सुदुर्दर्शम् *sudurdarsam :* most difficult to see, देवाः अपि *devah api :* even the Gods, नित्यम् *nityam :* always, अस्य रूपस्य *asya rupasya :* of this Form (Cosmic-Form), दर्शनकाङ्क्षिणः *darsanakankshinah* (*bhavati*) *:* are ever desirous to behold.

Substance: The Blessed Lord said: This form (the Cosmic-Form) which you have seen is most difficult to see; even the Gods are ever desirous of beholding that Form.

Commentary: It is very difficult for the common man to see the Cosmic-Form of the Lord. Perfect purity of mind, stainless devotion, and an entire submission of the human personality to the Lord,—these are the essential conditions to see the Lord in His Cosmic aspect. Therefore it is said '*sudurdarsam*' and not merely '*durdarsam*.' The idea is that very few could see God in His universal aspect.

53. नाहं वेदैर्न तपसा न दानेन न चेज्यया ।
शक्य एवंविधो द्रष्टुं दृष्टवानसि मां यथा ॥ ५३

Na'ham vedair na tapasa na danena na che' jyaya ।
sakya evamvidho drashtum drishtavan asi mam yatha ॥ 53

Meaning: माम् *mam* : Me, यथा *yatha* : how, दृष्टवान् असि *drishtavan asi* : you have seen, एवं विधः *evam vidha* : like this, अहम् *aham* : I, वेदैः *vedaih* : by Vedic study, द्रष्टुम् *drashtum* : to see, न शक्यः *na sakyah* : not possible, तपसा *tapasa* : by austerity, न *na* : not (possible to see), दानेन *danena* : by charity, न *na* : not (possible to see), इज्यया *ijyaya* : by sacrifice, न च *na cha* : and not (possible to see).

Substance: That Form of Mine, which you have seen, is not possible to behold either by Vedic study or by austerity, or by charity or by sacrifice.

Commentary: The same idea as in the 48th verse is emphasised here. Good in themselves, these practices like Vedic study, charity, etc., do not yield the highest reward of God-realisation without devotion (*Bhakti*).

The Lord declares the open path to God-realisation.

54. भक्त्या त्वनन्यया शक्य अहमेवंविधोऽर्जुन ।
ज्ञातुं द्रष्टुं च तत्त्वेन प्रवेष्टुं च परंतप ॥ ५४

Bhaktya tvananyaya sakya aham evamvidho'rjuna ।
jnatum drashtum cha tattvena praveshtum cha paramtapa ॥ 54

Meaning: परन्तप *parantapa*: O scorcher of foes अर्जुन *Arjuna*: O Arjuna, एवम् विधः अहम् *evam vidhah aham* : I am of this form, अनन्य भक्त्या तु *ananya bhaktya tu* : by single-minded, devotion only, तत्त्वेन *tattvena* : in essence, ज्ञातुम् *jnatum* : to be known, द्रष्टुम् च *drashtum cha* : and to be seen, प्रवेष्टुम् च *praveshtum cha* : and entered into (attain union), शक्यः *sakyah*: possible.

Substance: O Arjuna! I of this form become possible by single-minded devotion only, to be known, to be seen, and to be entered into, O scorcher of enemies!

Commentary: In the previous verse it was stated that God-realisation is not possible by Vedic study, sacrifices etc. In this verse, it is explained what makes union with God possible for man. This verse is therefore very important for all seekers. They should understand the full significance of the idea and realise it in practice.

It is here declared categorically that by single-minded devotion only the Lord could be known, seen, and attained. '*Ananya bhakti*' is emphasised in several places in the Gita. The mind should not be attached to anything in the objective world; it should be centred in the Lord as the sole refuge, as the most beloved and as the highest goal. Devotion that is not shared, that is not tempted away from God, that does not desire anything other than God, is single-minded devotion. Man's mind is generally possessed by worldly things and only a part of it is offered to the Lord. This is not '*ananya bhakti*'. When the mind is not distracted by anything material, it acquires divine power and thus attains the Lord.

Three stages of God-realisation are mentioned here—(1) *Jnatum*-to be known, (2) *drashtum*-to be seen, (3) *praveshtum*-to be entered into. In the beginning man acquires knowledge of

the nature of the Lord. Even this is difficult, because it requires deep study and correct understanding of the Sastras. At this stage, the Lord, though his nature is understood, is quite far-away. This is *Dwaita.* Then in the next stage the devotee is able to see the Lord face to face, have a clear vision of God in whatever form he contemplates Him. Now there is no doubt at all about His existence, because he has directly seen the Deity. The second step is higher than the first. God is seen like a leaf or fruit in one's own hand. This is nearly the state of *Visishtadvaita.*

After long and arduous practice the devotee becomes united with the Lord (*Praveshtum*). Like salt in water, like rain drops in the ocean, like water in milk, the devotee is merged in the Lord. Then there are no two entities, the devotee and the Lord. The Lord alone is. This is the highest stage. This is perfect *Advaita.* The aspirant should not stop anywhere till this highest goal is reached. The first is the nearness of God (*samipya*), the second is the vision of God (*sarupya*) and the third is union with God (*sayujya*). The natural progress of man towards God is explained thus in this verse. Every aspirant should move forward from the first to the second and from the second to the last and ultimate state. It is for this reason that the Lord has stated '*Jnatum*' first, and '*drashtum*' next, and '*Praveshtum*' last.

Suppose somebody tells us that he has seen a good and beautiful, highly relishing fruit in the market. What is our reaction? We are interested to go and see the fruit and then to buy it and eat it. At first we have come to know of the fruit (*jnatum*) and next we go and see it (*drashtum*), and finally we are fully satisfied by tasting the fruit for ourselves (*Praveshtum*). The last is the state of the *Jivanmukta*, the liberated man. It is *Moksha.* We come to know of a house, see it, and then enter it. Thus one should approach God and realise Him. Everybody should attain the highest *Advaitic* realisation even in this very life. Then only he is free from the bondage of '*samsara*'.

The Upanishad says—

"*Yada hyevaisha etasminnudara mantaram*
kurute atha tasya bhayam bhavati."

Even the slightest separation from the Lord causes fear. When there is fear of anything, it is not perfection. So every aspirant should strive to attain the Lord (*Praveshtum*) and free himself from fear.

If Vedic study alone could lead to God-realisation, the illiterates shall have to go without it. If austerity alone should lead to God-realisation the weak shall have no hope; If '*yajnas*' and '*Dana*' alone could lead to God, the poor shall have to be where they are. As it is declared by the Lord that by single-minded devotion alone he could be realised, every human being can aspire for God-realisation by pure and uncontaminated devotion. Thus out of His compassion, the Lord has revealed the easy path of God-realisation to all beings.

Question : *What is the way to God-realisation ?*

Answer : Single-minded devotion.

Question : *What are the stages of God-realisation ?*

Answer : (1) Knowing Him, (2) Seeing Him, (3) and being united with Him.

The Lord declares how man could attain Him.

55. मत्कर्मकृन्मत्परमो मद्भक्तः सङ्गवर्जितः ।
निर्वैरः सर्वभूतेषु यः स मामेति पाण्डव ॥ ५५

Matkarmakrin matparamo madbhaktah sangavarjitah ।
nirvairah sarvabhuteshu yah sa mam eti pandava ॥ 55

Meaning : पाण्डव *Pandava :* O Arjuna! मत्कर्मकृत् *mat-karmakrit :* works for me (surrendering all actions to Me or doing work dear to Me), मत्परमः *matparamah:* looks on Me as the Supreme, the highest goal of life, मद्भक्तः *madbhaktah :* has devotion for Me, सङ्गवर्जितः *sangavarjitah :* is freed from

attachment (desire and possession), सर्वभूतेषु *sarvabhuteshu* : towards all creatures, निर्वैरः *nirvairah* : without hatred, यः *yah* : who, सः *sah* : he, माम् *mam* : to Me, एति *eti* : goes.

Substance : O Arjuna ! Who works for Me only, who looks on Me as the only refuge, who is devoted to Me, who is freed from attachment (to sense-objects and sense-pleasures, without any desire for them) who has no enemity to any being, he attains Me.

Commentary : It is clearly described how and by whom the Lord could be realised. Five essential qualities are mentioned here. Any being who could cultivate these qualities will attain the Lord without distinction of caste, creed, race or nationality. A potent medicine works on all who takes it. Any one can light fire if oil, wick and match are secured. So is the Lord realisable by all who cultivate divine virtues.

1) *Matkarmakrit* : This may refer to ***Puja***, ***Japa***, and ***Dhyana*** which are prescribed by the ***Sastras*** as methods of worshipping the Lord. Or, it may be taken to include all work (not evil work) which man offers to the Lord in a spirit of self-surrender. Such a man gradually develops purity of mind, acquires God's grace, and attains *Moksha*. In the course of one's daily life, he performs many actions, and all those should be surrendered to the Lord. Work then becomes worship. They are so transformed that they lead to liberation. Hence '*matkarmakrit*' is mentioned as the first quality of the aspirant.

2) *Matparamah* : The seeker should firstly realise that God is his sole refuge. Many people spend day and night in the pursuit of worldly objects. They are material things, perishable stuff; they cannot lead one to freedom and perfection. '*Paramatma*' alone is real. Knowing this, the seeker considers the Lord as his sole refuge. He attains God.

3) *Madbhaktah* : The man devoted to the Lord attains Him quickly. Of what avail is it to cling to mundane things which bind man and throw into the jaws of death ? Love for

God is the real thing. God is the saviour. He is the Liberator. He is alone worthy of devotion and none else.

4) *Sangavarjitah* : '*Sanga*' means attachment for the body and the objective world. Detachment should be practised. With the sword of non-attachment the mighty tree of '*samsara*' should be cut (*asanga sastrena dhridena cchitva*–15th Discourse). Like the water-drop on the lotus-leaf, though engaged in a hundred worldly activities, man should be detached by the very power of discrimination (*Vichara*). By such detachment he attains '*Moksha*'.

5) *Nirvairah sarvabhuteshu* : The fifth quality is love for all beings, and freedom from enemity and hatred. It is not love for this or that being but love for all,–universal love. All beings are different forms of God (Narayanaswarupas). Harm done to any being is harm done to God. This truth is mentioned many times in the Gita (*Adveshta sarvabhutanam* etc.). Of what avail is it to read the Scriptures and conduct worship of God when there is hatred and jealousy in the heart. That is not practical ***Vedanta***. He who takes medicine should observe the rules of diet. The above-mentioned four qualities are like medicine, and this universal love, the fifth, is like diet. One's spiritual practice should be permeated with Universal love.

This verse is of very great importance in the Gita. Sri Sankaracharya declares it to be the highest truth in the Gita, the very essence of the Gita. It contains in a nut-shell all the different *yogas*; that which gives life to all these *yogas* is universal love.

1.	*Matkarmakrit*	—	Karma Yoga	Medicine.
2.	*Matparamah*	—	Dhyana Yoga	
3.	*Madbhaktah*	—	Bhakti Yoga	
4.	*Sangavarjitah*	—	Jnana Yoga	
5.	*Nirvairassarvabhuteshu*	:	Compassion for all beings.	Diet.

Therefore the seekers should contemplate this verse again and again, and acquire all the virtues needed for self-realisation even in this birth.

Question : *Who can attain God ?*

Answer : He who does God's work, who takes sole refuge in Him, who is devoted to Him, who is free from desire and attachment, and who has love for all beings, attains God.

Question : *What then is the path to God-realisation ?*

Answer : 1) Doing work for God by surrendering all (good) actions to Him,

2) taking refuge in Him,

3) having utmost devotion to God,

4) practising non-attachment,

5) possessing love for all beings without any trace of ill-feeling towards any creature.

इति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे
श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे विश्वरूपसंदर्शनयोगो नाम
एकादशोऽध्यायः ॥

Iti Srimad Bhagavadgitasupanishatsu brahmavidyayam yogasastre Sri Krishnarjuna samvade Visvarupa Sandarsana Yogo nama ekadaso'dhyayah.

Thus, in the Upanishads of the glorious Bhagavad Gita, in the Science of the Eternal, in the Scripture of Yoga, in the dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna ends the Eleventh Discourse entitled Viswarupa Sandarsana Yoga

(The Yoga of the Vision of the Cosmic-Form.)

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श्री भगवद्गीता

SRI BHAGAVAD GITA

अथ द्वादशोऽध्यायः

Atha dvadasodhyayah

TWELFTH DISCOURSE

भक्तियोगः

BHAKTI YOGA

THE YOGA OF DEVOTION

I. The title of the Discourse :

As this discourse expounds the principles of *Bhakti*, it is entitled Bhakti yoga. The nature of *Bhakti*, the qualities of the *Bhakta*, the methods of spiritual practice are mentioned here. It starts with *Bhakti* and ends with *Bhakti*, and so it is called the Yoga of Devotion.

II. Important points of the Discourse :

1) Thoughts about the Divine with form and without form : (1-5)

2) The excellence of Bhakti Yoga (6-8)

3) Different spiritual practices (9-12)

4) The qualities of the *Bhakta* (13-20)

III. How this Discourse is connected with the previous one :

From the 2nd Discourse upto 11 th, the Lord has explained in some places the knowledge of the Imperishable

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Brahman, and again He has presented His manifested Form in the *Vibhuti Yoga* and the *Visvarupasandarsana Yoga*. The Lord ultimately revealed His Cosmic-Form. At the end of that Discourse, He has mentioned how the devotee could attain Him by complete devotion to Him. (*Matkarma Krit Matparamo Madbhaktah* etc). All this is the worship of God with form (*Saguna*). Arjuna who heard both the methods of worship and realisation of *Atma*, and of devotion to the Lord with Form-is perplexed as to what particular method he should choose and who is superior among these spiritual seekers-meditators on the formless Brahman or worshippers of Lord-? The Discourse starts with Arjuna's question.

Arjuna's question :

अर्जुन उवाच

1. एवं सततयुक्ता ये भक्तास्त्वां पर्युपासते ।
ये चाप्यक्षरमव्यक्तं तेषां के योगवित्तमाः ॥ १

Arjuna uvacha

Evam satatayukta ye bhaktastvam paryupasate ।
ye cha'pyaksharam avyaktam tesham ke yogavittamah । 1

अर्जुन उवाच *Arjuna uvacha :* Arjuna Said.

Meaning : एवम् *evam :* thus, (as declared in the previous Discourse), सततयुक्ताः *satatayuktah :* ever harmonised in mind, ये भक्ताः *ye bhaktah :* those devotees, त्वाम् *tvam :* You, पर्युपासते *paryupasate :* worship, ये च अपि *ye cha api :* and also those, अव्यक्तम् *avyaktam :* the unminifest (not visible to the senses and mind), अक्षरम् *aksharam:* Imperishable Brahman, (*paryupasate :* meditate upon), तेषाम् *tesham :* of the two, के *ke :* who, योगवित्तमाः *yogavittamah :* are superior knowers of yoga ?

Substance : Arjuna said-Thus, those who worship You, ever steadfast, and also those who meditate on the unmanifest Imperishable Brahman-of the two types of seekers, who are superior knowers of *yoga* ?

Commentary : *evam :* ('*thus*') : This word refers to the last verse (*matkarmakrit* etc.) in the previous Discourse.

Arjuna's question is simple and clear. Who are superior-those who worship the Divine form, as the Cosmic Manifestation, or the four-armed Vishnu, or the cowherd boy of Brindavan-(*sagunopasakas*) - or those who meditate on the formless, attributeless Brahman (*nirgunopasakas*) ? In the 2nd Discourse the Lord has declared the deathless and birthless reality of *Atma*, and in the 8th Discourse, he has explained the *Nirguna* aspect as Imperishable Brahman. It is quite natural for Arjuna to question the Lord about the superior excellence of either of the two. Arjuna's question is the question of all seekers in the world-which is the better method of worship-*Saguna* or *Nirguna*?

The Lord answer the question and clears all doubts.

श्री भगवानुवाच

2. मय्यावेश्य मनो ये मां नित्ययुक्ता उपासते ।
श्रद्धया परयोपेतास्ते मे युक्ततमा मताः ॥ २

Sri Bhagavan uvacha

Mayyavesya mano ye mam nitya yukta upasate ।
sraddhaya parayo'petas te me yuktatama matah । 2

श्री भगवानुवाच *Sri Bhagavan uvacha :* The Blessed Lord said.

Meaning : मयि *mayi :* in Me, मनः *manah :* mind, आवेश्य *avesaya :* established, नित्ययुक्ताः *nitya yuktah :* ever thinking of God (centered only in God), परया *paraya :* with supreme, श्रद्धया *sraddhaya :* faith, उपेताः *upetah :* endowed, ये *ye :* who, माम् *mam :* Me, उपासते *upasate :* worship, ते *te :* they, युक्ततमाः *yuktatamah:* (are) the highest yogis, मे मताः *me matah :* (is) my opinion.

Substance : The Blessed Lord said : With mind established in Me, ever steadfast in their devotion, endowed with the highest faith, those who worship Me, they are in my opinion, the best of *yogis*.

Commentary : The Lord answers Arjuna's question about the superiority of the *Saguna* and *Nirguna* worshippers. The Lord declares that who-so-ever worships Him with supreme faith and single-minded concentration, he is the best of *yogis*. Three aspects of spiritual practice are mentioned here.

1. Establishing the mind in the Lord,
2. ever thinking of Him,
3. having firm faith in God.

Whoever possesses these three qualities is the best of *yogis*. Whether he is a *Saguna* or *Nirguna* worshipper or whether he is a *sannyasi* or house-holder—these distinctions have no significance at all. The Lord's amazing insight into spiritual Truth is revealed here. Devotion, faith and concentrated effort-these are emphasised as the final determining factors in spiritual life, and not the path or method of worship.

The Lord speaks of the worshippers of Nirguna Brahman :

3. ये त्वक्षरमनिर्देश्यमव्यक्तं पर्युपासते ।
सर्वत्रगमचिन्त्यं च कूटस्थमचलं ध्रुवम् ॥ ३

4. संनियम्येन्द्रियग्रामं सर्वत्र समबुद्धयः ।
ते प्राप्नुवन्ति मामेव सर्वभूतहिते रताः ॥ ४

Ye tvaksharam anirdesyam avyaktam paryupasate ।
sarvatragam achintyam cha kutastham achalam dhruvam ॥ 3

Samniyamye'ndriyagramam sarvatra samabuddhayah ।
te prapnuvanti mam eva sarva bhuta hite ratah ॥ 4

Meaning : ये तु *ye tu :* verily those, इन्द्रियग्रामम् *indriya-gramam :* the aggregate of the senses, संनियम्य *samniyamya :* having well restrained, सर्वत्र *sarvatra :* every where, समबुद्धयः *samabuddhayah :* even-minded, सर्वभूतहितेरताः *sarvabhuta hiteratah :* rejoicing in the welfare of all beings, अनिर्देश्यम् *anirdesyam :* indefinable, अव्यक्तम् *avyaktam :* the unmanifest, not perceptible to the senses, or which cannot be apprehended by any known standards (Nirguna Brahman), अचिन्त्यम् *achintyam :* beyond thought, कूटस्थम् *kutastam :* changeless (the foundation for the world), अचलम् *achalam :* immovable, ध्रुवम् *dhruvam :* eternal, सर्वत्रगम् च *sarvatragamcha :* and all-pervading, अक्षरम् *Ashraram :* the imperishable, पर्युपासते *paryupasate :* worship, meditate upon, ते *te :* they, माम् एव *mam vea :* Me alone, प्राप्नुवन्ति *prapnuvanti :* attain.

Substance : Those who, having restrained well all the senses, even-minded everywhere, rejoicing in the welfare of all beings, meditate on the indefinable, eternal, all-pervading and Imperishable Brahman-they attain Me alone.

Commentary : One *Paramatma* is both with form and without form (*Saguna* and *Nirguna*), and so the goal of both forms of worship is the same. Whatever may be the method of worship, if it is practised with faith and devotion, man reaches *Paramatma*. These two verses deal with persons who seek for *Nirguna Para Brahmam*. The first verse states the attributes of the Imperishable Brahman and the second the qualities necessary for the aspirant for such realisation. Even though the seeker carries on his meditation on the formless Brahman, yet, if he does not possess purity of mind, self-restraint, equanimity and love for all beings, his effort does not yield the desired results. Without these qualities of good character, realisation of Brahman is impossible. His worship will be like depositing good and relishing eatables in an impure vessel. All of them become corrupt and contaminated by the impurities of the vessel. Both the paths of realisation require the above qualities of character. Therefore the Lord mentions the three indispensable qualities of the aspirant in this context.

1) Complete self-restraint,
2) Equal-mindedness,
3) Universal love.

The seekers should cultivate these three qualities well while carrying on their method of worship. Here the word '*Samniyamya*' is used to emphasise complete control of all the senses; the word '*Sarvatra*' emphasises equanimity at all times and under all circumstances; and '*Sarvabhutahiteratah*' emphasises love for all beings without any distinction whatsoever. Thus meditating, the seeker attains the Lord undoubtedly. Let all the seekers examine themselves how far they have acquired these basic virtues.

The difficult nature of worshipping the formless Brahman is stated :

5. क्लेशोऽधिकतरस्तेषामव्यक्तासक्तचेतसाम् ।
अव्यक्ता हि गतिर्दुःखं देहवद्भिरवाप्यते ॥ ५

Kleso'dhikataras tesham avyaktasakta chetasam ।
avyakta hi gatir duhkham dehavadbhir avapyate ॥ 5

Meaning : अव्यक्ता सक्तचेतसाम् *avyaktasaktachetasam:* who aspire for the unmanifest Parabrahman, तेषाम् *tesham :* for those, क्लेशः *klesah :* difficulty, अधिकतरः *adhikatarah :* (is) greater, हि *hi :* because, अव्यक्ताः *avyaktah :* the unmanifested, गतिः *gatih:* goal, path, देहवद्भिः *dehavadbhih :* for the embodied beings, दुःखम् *dukham :* with difficulty, अवाप्यते *avapyate :* is reached.

Substance : Greater is the difficulty for those whose mind is set on the realisation of the unmanifest (*Nirguna Brahman*), because the unmanifested is reached with difficulty by embodied beings.

Commentary : It is here declared that for those who are body-minded, the worship of *Nirguna Brahman* is very difficult. For others it is easy. That is, for the aspirant who is more self-controlled, who has acquired facility in desireless action, the contemplation of Brahman is quite suitable and comfortable. So it should be clearly understood that the difficulty here is only

for those who have not acquired purity by worshipping Isvara (God). It should also be remembered that in the previous two verses, the Lord has declared that the goal of both the paths is the same, and both require certain qualities without which no spiritual growth is possible.

Therefore let the seekers be not in a hurry to reach the unmanifest even at the start. Let them try to get over the body-attached egoism by worship of Isvara, and obtain complete mastery of their senses through desireless performance of all good actions. Then self-realisation becomes possible and man attains union with Brahman easily. Most people complain that their '*sadhana*' is not bearing fruit. It is because their minds are not purified. Of what use is it to sow the seeds before preparing the ground ? Will any building stand without proper foundation? So, the mind does not come to rest in Brahman when it is impure by past '*samskaras*'. The aspirant should understand the position correctly, so that he might not feel frustrated by failing to get the proper results immediately. In truth, worship and meditation are realms of bliss and blessedness. One is entering the ocean of *Sachidananda*! Why the pain and difficulty ? It is intended to remove suffering and not to cause it. But people find it difficult and painful, because they do not know the path clearly and distinctly. So for some time in the beginning let the seekers carry on worship of Isvara (*Saguna*) and then enter the path of meditation on the imperishable Brahman (*Nirguna*).

The Lord declares that He would lift His devotees from the ocean of 'samsara' :

6. ये तु सर्वाणि कर्माणि मयि संन्यस्य मत्पराः ।
अनन्येनैव योगेन मां ध्यायन्त उपासते ॥ ६

7. तेषामहं समुद्धर्ता मृत्युसंसारसागरात् ।
भवामि न चिरात्पार्थ मय्यावेशितचेतसाम् ॥ ७

Ye tu sarvani karmani mayi sannyasya matparah ।
ananyeni'va yogena mam dhyayanta upasate ॥ 6

Tesham aham samuddharta mrityu samsara sagarat ।
bhavami na chirat partha mayyavesita chetasam ॥ 7

Meaning : पार्थ *Partha :* O Arjuna ! येतु *ye tu :* those verily, सर्वाणि *sarvani :* all, कर्माणि *karmani :* actions, मयि *mayi :* in Me, संन्यस्य *sannyasya :* surrendering, मत्पराः *matparah :* having Me as their goal, (Mind fixed in Me), अनन्येन योगेन *ananyena yogena :* with yoga dedicated to Me, माम् एव *mam eva :* Me alone, ध्यायन्तः *dhyayantah :* meditating, उपासते *upasate:* worship, मय्यावेशित चेतसाम् *mayyavesita chetasam:* with mind established on Me, तेषाम् *tesham :* for them, अहम् *aham :* I, मृत्युसंसार सागरात् *mrityusamsara sagarat :* from the ocean of death and Samsara, न चिरात् *na chirat :* quickly (ere long), समुद्धर्ता *samuddharta :* the saviour, भवामि *bhavami :* become.

Substance : O Arjuna ! Those verily who renounce all actions in Me, think of Me as the only refuge and worship Me with single-minded devotion and *Dhyana*, to them I become the saviour and quickly lift them up from the ocean of death and '*samsara*'.

Commentary : In the first verse the path to be followed by the seeker and in the second, the highest reward of such '*sadhana*' are mentioned. The path of '*sadhana*' includes three things–(1) Renouncing all actions to Him, (2) Considering Him as the sole refuge and the highest goal, (3) Worshipping Him with undivided mind. In this way, if man worships God, He becomes the Saviour and lifts him up from the ocean of *samsara*. What wonderful reward for His worshippers ! The Lord's offer should inspire all human beings with joy and faith. They can derive consolation that they shall be freed from the fearful agonising tortures of worldly life. For the individual *Jiva* who is whirled about from birth to death and from death to birth again and again from time immemorial (*Punarapi jananam punarapi maranam*), these words of the Lord indeed have the potency of Nectar ! What the life-boat is for the drowning man, so is the Lord for unfortunate humanity. He would lift them up

from this terrible ocean of '*samsara*'. But man should lift up his hand towards God, obtain His grace by devotion and self-surrender. For others who deny Him, who do not think of Him, there is no hope. The Lord is indifferent to them. They should have to wander about in the wilderness of ignorance and death. If man does what is expected of him, the Lord is ever by his side to help him. What can God do, if man refuses to accept Him and seek for His help? Therefore the wise man, understanding his terrible fate in the wheel of '*samsara*,' should strive in every way to obtain God's grace. Nothing else can cure the disease of worldly life.

Yetu–All men are qualified to obtain God's grace.

Sarvani karmani : All actions done by man should be surrendered to God.

Ananyenaiva yogena : After speaking of several *yogas* like *Karma*, *Jnana* and *Dhyana* etc. the Lord brings out another *yoga*–'*ananya yoga*'. This is not a separate *yoga*, but no other *yoga* can yield proper fruit if it is not '*ananya yoga*.' Single mindedness, renunciation of all worldly thoughts and actions is the essence of this *yoga*. Then any *yoga* acquires tremendous power.

Mam dhyayanta upasate : Here the word '*dhyana*' is added to '*upasana*'. It is not simply worship without understanding, but worship combined with deep insight into the meaning and significance of the worship. When doing '*japa*', the sacred '*mantra*' should not only be uttered but its meaning also should be contemplated. Similarly, when worshipping the Lord, His Divine Nature, Form and qualities should be thought of deeply in a concentrated manner. Patanjali explains the same thing in his *Yoga Sutras*.

"*Tatra pratyayaikatanata dhyanam*" (3—2)

Samuddharta : God is a perfect Saviour.

Mrutyusamsara sagarat : '*Samsara*' is compared to an ocean. It is fearful like the ocean, infected with dreadly dragons of desire and hatred (*Kama* and *Krodha*), never at rest and peace,

always bubbling and boiling. Man is naturally terrified by it. And yet, some people think of the pleasures of *'samsara'*, wish for such fleeting joys. It is nothing but ignorance. They have yet to realise the foul and filthy nature of *'samsara'*, and the terrible end that comes to them through it. The Lord states it here–"*Mrityusamsara*". Nothing can be a truer description of the wheel of birth and death and the horrible sorrow and suffering during the interval between the two. Man who is bound to this rack, should naturally seek for God's grace, the embodiment of bliss and blessedness.

na chirat : Man is saved quickly (Gajendra, Prahlada, Ambarisha and Draupadi are examples).

Question : *What is the nature of Samsara ?*

Answer : Like the ocean it is boundless, unfathomable. It leads to birth and death.

Question : *How to escape from it ?*

Answer : By seeking for God's grace, man is lifted out of the ocean.

Question : *How to win God's grace ?*

Answer : By renouncing all actions to Him, by thinking of Him as the sole refuge, by fixing the mind in Him, and worshipping Him with single-minded devotion man obtains God's grace.

In four verses, the Lord explains different practices to be followed by the devotee and first mentions establishing the mind in Him.

8. मय्येव मन आधत्स्व मयि बुद्धिं निवेशय ।
निवसिष्यसि मय्येव अत ऊर्ध्वं न संशयः ॥ ८

Mayyeva mana adhatsva mayi buddhim nivesaya
nivasishyasi mayyeva ata urdhvam na samsayah 8

Meaning : मयि एव *mayi eva* : in Me alone, मनः *manah* : mind, आधत्स्व *adhatsva* : fix firmly, मयि *mayi* : in Me, बुद्धिम् *buddhim* : intellect, mind, निवेशय *nivesaya* : place, अतःऊर्ध्वम् *atah urdhvam* : thereafter, मयि एव *mayi eva* : in Me alone, निवसिष्यसि *nivasishyasi* : you shall live, न संशयः *na samsayah* : (there is) no doubt.

Substance : Fix the mind firmly in Me only; place the intellect in Me, thereafter you shall live in Me only; there is no doubt about this.

Commentary : The Lord is now teaching various practices to reach Him, one after another. The Lord is clear and simple in the teaching, like an able teacher when he is instructing a young boy. The first lesson is fixing the mind firmly in Him. It is not enough to fix the mind only, the intellect also should be placed in Him. Why ? The intellect is the deciding power, and without its direction the mind wavers and wanders away from the goal. The mind thinks and reason decides. It is reason (*'buddhi'*) which takes the final decision that the Lord alone is real and all else is like water in the mirage. By the very power of this decision, the mind becomes one-pointed and is then established in God. If the mind wavers, it is because the intellect has not decided aright. So the Lord here says that the intellect should be placed in Him. Then meditation becomes deep and firm. Man then lives in God. Like salt dissolving in water, the mind becomes that which it contemplates. Thinking of the Lord, by giving up all the evil qualities arising from ignorance and past *samskaras* is *Moksha*. This is what is meant by living in God. The Lord adds–there is no doubt about this. "Follow this practice, and you shall live in Me", declares the Lord to all mankind and assuredly confirms his declaration. The devotee's duty is stated here, and his future is taken over by the Lord.

na samsayah : There is no doubt about it. What should be the faith of the devotee, when the Lord gives such an assurance !

mayi eva : "In Me only"–the mind should not move away from the Lord towards any other object.

Question : *Where should the mind and reason be fixed ?*

Answer : In the Lord only.

Question : *What is the result ?*

Answer : Man lives in God. There is no doubt about this.

The Lord explains what the aspirant should do if he cannot fix the mind in Him.

9. अथ चित्तं समाधातुं न शक्नोषि मयि स्थिरम् ।
अभ्यासयोगेन ततो मामिच्छाप्तुं धनञ्जय ॥ ९

Atha chittam samadhatum na saknoshi mayi sthiram ।
abhyasa yogena tato mam iccha'ptum dhanamjaya ॥ 9

Meaning : धनंजय *dhananjaya :* O Arjuna ! अथ *atha :* if, चित्तम् *chittam :* mind, मयि *mayi :* in Me, स्थिरम् *sthiram :* firmly, समाधातुम् *samadhatum :* to fix, न शक्नोषि *na saknoshi :* you are not able, ततः *tatah :* then, अभ्यासयोगेन *abhyasayogena :* by the yoga of constant practice, माम् *mam :* Me, आप्तुम् *aptum :* to reach, इच्छ *iccha :* (you) wish.

Substance : O Arjuna! If you are not able to fix the mind firmly in Me, then desire to reach Me by the *yoga* of constant practice. (Practise constantly and fix the mind in Me).

Commentary : The Lord offers certain alternatives for those who are not able to follow the path pointed out in the previous verse. How much the Lord is interested in His devotees! How kind and compassionate He is to all! The mind is the cause for bondage or limitation.

Mana eva manushyanam
karanam bandhamokshayoh.
(*Amritabindupanishad*).

So the mind should be dissolved in *Paramatma*, God, for attaining *Moksha*. The Lord exhorts Arjuna to attain that state by the *yoga* of constant practice. There is no other way. Every one should strive for this state by withdrawing the mind from

external objects and fixing it in the Self. If, in the beginning, this is not possible, by slow and steady practice the mind should be trained to enter the inner sphere of *Atma*. As *Moksha* is nothing else but merging the mind in *Atma*, all seekers should achieve it sooner or later. In the Sixth Discourse, the Lord has already pointed out the truth.

Abhyasayogena : This *yoga* is the common ingredient in all the other *yogas–Karma*, *Bhakti*, *Dhyana* and *Jnana*. Without it no *yoga* could develop and lead the person to the goal.

Generally the seekers put this question to their Master (Guru-)"Revered Sir ! My mind is unsteady and I am not able to fix it in God. What shall I do ?" The Lord gives the answer to such seekers here. He says that there is no other way except to control the mind by long and untiring practice. In the Sixth Discourse, Arjuna raises the same issue and the Master answers it clearly and finally.

Abhyasena tu kaunteya
vairagyena cha grihyate (6-35).

As there is no other way, all men should try their best to control the mind by steady practice and dispassion.

Question : *What should man do if the mind is unsteady and does not rest in Atma ?*

Answer : The aspirant should achieve that state by constant practice. There is no other way.

The Lord explains what should be done if a seeker is not competent even for Abhyasayoga.

10. अभ्यासेऽप्यसमर्थोऽसि मत्कर्मपरमो भव ।
मदर्थमपि कर्माणि कुर्वन्सिद्धिमवाप्स्यसि ॥ १०

Abhyase'pyasamartho'si matkarmaparamo bhava ।
mad artham api karmani kurvan siddhim avapsyasi ॥ 10

Meaning : अभ्यासे अपि *abhyase api :* if in practice also,

matkarmaparamah : intent on doing work for My sake, भव *bhava :* be, मदर्थम् *madartham :* for my sake, कर्माणि *karmani :* actions, कुर्वन् अपि *kurvan api :* doing also, सिद्धिम् *siddhim :* perfection (Moksha), अवाप्स्यसि *avapsyasi :* you shall attain.

Substance : Even if you are not capable of practice, do work for My sake; By doing work for My sake also, you shall attain perfection.

Commentary : Again the Lord offers an alternate path for those who are not able to get steadiness in meditation even by constant practice. They should engage themselves in doing good actions, charitable deeds of helpfulness, and beneficience on all beings. And such actions should be offered to the Lord, without any desire for personal reward. This is simply *Nishkama Karma. Japa*, prayer, *'namasamkirtan'*, worship, vows of fasting and silence, all these come under good actions for the sake of God. This is the idea of "*matkarmaparamo bhava*". By such actions the mind is purified, and by purity of mind, liberation is attained. Thus *Nishkama Karma* leads to perfection. This is recommended to those who are not able to still the mind in *Dhyana*. Only, those actions should be done in a spirit of self-surrender to God. They should be done to win God's grace and not for obtaining selfish rewards. This idea should be firmly held in the mind while performing all good work in the world.

Question : *What is the way for those who are not competent even for Abhyasa yoga ?*

Answer : They should perform good actions in a selfless spirit and surrender the fruits to God.

The Lord explains what should be done if the seeker is incompetent even to work for His sake.

11. अथैतदप्यशक्तोऽसि कर्तुं मद्योगमाश्रितः ।
सर्वकर्मफलत्यागं ततः कुरु यतात्मवान् ॥ ११

Athai tad apyasakto'si kartum madyogam asritah ।
sarva karma phala tyagam tatah kuru yatatmavan ॥ 11

Meaning : अथ *atha :* if, मद्योगम् *madyogam :* My yoga, आश्रितः *asritah :* taking refuge in Me, एतत् अपि *etat api :* even this, कर्तुं *kartum :* to do, अशक्तः असि *asaktah asi :* you are not able, ततः *tatah :* then, यतात्मवान् *yatatmavan :* self-controlled, सर्वकर्मफलत्यागम् *sarvakarmaphalatyagam :* renunciation of all actions and their fruits, कुरु *kuru :* do.

Substance : If you are not able to do My *yoga* taking refuge in Me, then renounce all actions and the fruits there of, self-controlled.

Commentary : The Lord suggests the easiest of all paths here. Man is engaged in a hundred actions day and night in the course of his life. While performing these actions, let him remember God, think of Him as the doer and himself a mere instrument, and surrender all works and their fruits entirely to God. That is, all work should be done in a spirit of self-surrender to God. Bad actions are not included here, because they are already prohibited by the *Sastras.* No one should do sinful acts. Worship of God, singing His name and glory, charity, works of social welfare, all these are good actions and they should be surrendered to God. (*Isvararpanam, Ramarpanam*, or *Krishnarpanam*). As several paths are suggested, each man may take up any practice suitable to his physical and mental pre-disposition. This last path is within the reach of all persons. While walking, let it be thought of as *pradakshinam* of God. While talking let it be thought of as singing His glory. This may be extended to all actions. By this, the Lord is constantly kept in view, and the mind, without any strain comes to entertain Godly ideas in the natural way. The Lord has already said "*mam anusmara yudhya cha*" – "Remember Me and fight." So, this path is the easiest and the best-fitted for all sincere seekers on the spiritual path. All sin is destroyed, the mind becomes pure, and liberation is attained ultimately.

yatatmavan : Thn seeker should be self-controlled. Without it constant memory of God and self-surrender to Him are

not possible. So the least that man can do is to cultivate that degree of self-control to remember the Lord while carrying on the various activities of life and surrender the fruits of actions to Him.

Question : *What is the way for those who are not competant to do actions for His sake ?*

Answer : Self-controlled, man should surrender all actions with the fruits thereof to God. This is the least way for all people who are not competent for higher plights of yoga.

The excellence of 'Karmaphala tyaga' is declared.

12. श्रेयो हि ज्ञानमभ्यासात् ज्ञानाद्ध्यानं विशिष्यते ।
ध्यानात्कर्मफलत्यागस्त्यागाच्छान्तिरनन्तरम् ॥ १२

Sreyo hi jnanam abhyasat jnanad dhyanam visisyate ।
dhyanat karmaphala tyagas tyagacchantir anantaram ॥ 12

Meaning : अभ्यासात् *abhyasat* : than practice (without understanding,) ज्ञानम् *jnanam* : knowledge (obtained by the study of the Sastras), श्रेयो हि *sreyohi* : better indeed, ज्ञानात् *jnanat* : than (such) knowledge, ध्यानम् *dhyanam* : meditation, विशिष्यते *visishyate* : is better, excels, ध्यानात् *dhyanat* : than meditation (stillness of mind at the time of Dhyanam), कर्मफलत्यागः *karmaphalatyagah* : renouncing the fruits of actions (keeping the mind pure even in external worldly life), विशिष्यते *visishyate* : is better, त्यागात् *tyagat* : from renunciation, अनन्तरम् *anantaram* : immediately, शान्तिः *santih* : peace, भवति *bhavati* : is.

Substance : Than practice (without discrimination) knowledge (derived from the study of the *Sastras*) is better indeed ! than (such) knowledge, meditation is better, than meditation (stillness of mind at the time of meditation) renunciation of all fruits of action is better; immediately after renunciation peace is attained.

Commentary : Here *'abhyasa'* means practice without discrimination; *'Jnana'* means knowledge got through study of books, *'Dhyana'* means thinking over the object at the time of meditation.

Jnanat dhyanam visishyate : Of course, direct experience through *'Dhyana'* is far higher than mere knowledge got through the study of the scriptures. *'Dhyana'* means the realisation of knowledge by constant meditation. This is indeed far higher than mere knowledge derived from the study of books.

Dhyanat karmaphalatyagah : Renunciation of action and their fruits is higher than *'Dhyana'*. For the unripened *Dhyana-yogi*, the mind may be still and pure only at the time of meditation. But when he comes into practical life, there is always the danger of its being contaminated by worldly objects. But for the man who has surrendered all actions to God, the mind is always pure. The *'Tyagi'* enjoys purity everywhere and at all times. Therefore it is said here that *'tyaga'* is higher than *'Dhyana'*. From this, we understand the superior excellence of *'Nishkama Karma'*. Most people are engaged in work. Very few can renounce work completely. So for the majority of mankind this path is most suitable, and leads them to a higher realisation than *'jnana'* and *'dhyana'*. Moreover, purity of mind is essential for all *yogas*. And such purity is attainable by *Nishkama Karma*. If this is practised for long, the foundation of spiritual life would be firm and steady. The higher realisation can be had only after this purity is perfected in the mind and heart

Tyagat santiranantaram : Peace is the immediate reward of self-surrender to God. Renunciation of the ego, renunciation of the objective world, renunciation of sin and evil-this is immediately followed by peace. The impurities of the mind being cleansed, peace flows into it like a flood (*tesham santih saswati netaresham*). *Atma* shines forth in the pure heart. Every one in the sorrowful world is seeking for peace. How to get it ? "*tyagat santih*"-from renunciation, peace is obtained. Therefore one should give up all sensual pleasures, fruits of actions, egoism and the binding sense of doership. Then he

shall experience the highest peace. Such is the path shown by the Lord to all mankind.

Question : *What is the excellence of 'Karmaphalatyaga ?*

Answer : It is better than practice without understanding, than knowledge obtained from books, than *Dhyana* which stills the mind only during the time of meditation.

Question : *How to attain peace ?*

Answer : By renunciation of the fruits of action.

Having explained different spiritual practices, the Lord now describes the attributes of the devotee :

13. अद्वेष्टा सर्वभूतानां मैत्रः करुण एव च ।
निर्ममो निरहङ्कारः समदुःखसुखः क्षमी ॥ १३

14. संतुष्टः सततं योगी यतात्मा दृढनिश्चयः ।
मय्यर्पितमनोबुद्धिर्यो मद्भक्तः स मे प्रियः ॥ १४

Adveshta sarva bhutanam maitrah karuna eva cha ।
nirmamo nirahamkarah samaduhkhasukhah kshami । 13

Samtustah satatam yogi yatatma dridhanischayah ।
mayyarpita manobuddhiryo madbhaktah sa me priyah ॥ 14

Meaning : सर्वभूतानाम् *sarvabhutanam :* towards all beings, अद्वेष्टा *adveshta :* without hatred, मैत्रः *maitrah :* friendly, करुण एव च *karuna eva cha:* and also compassionate, निर्ममः *nirmamah:* without a sense of me and mine, निरहङ्कारः *nirahankarah :* without egoism, समदुःखसुखः *samaduhkhasukhah :* equal-minded in sorrow and happiness, क्षमी *kshmi :* forgiving, सततम् *satatam:* always, सन्तुष्टः *santushtah :* contented, योगी *yogi :* steady in meditation, यतात्मा *yatatma :* self-controllded, दृढनिश्चयः *dridhanischayah :* of firm conviction, मयि *mayi :* in Me, अर्पित *arpita :* dedicated, मनोबुद्धिः *manobuddhih :* mind and intellect, मद्भक्तः *madbhaktah :* My devotee, यः *yah :* who, सः *sah :* he, मे *me :* to Me, प्रियः *priyah :* (is) dear.

Substance : Who does not hate any being, who is friendly and compassionate, who is free from attachment and egoism, who is equal-minded in sorrow and happiness, who is forgiving, who is always contented, steady in meditation, who is self-cotrolled and firm in conviction, who has surrendered his mind and intellect in Me, he (such a devotee) My *Bhakta* is dear to me.

Commentary : In seven verses the Lord ennumerates the qualities which His devotee should possess. Thirty five virtues are mentioned and the devotee who possesses them is dear to the Lord. Each one is a subject of study, and unless the *sadhaka* acquires perfection in all of them, he is not supposed to have passed the test of a devotee. Let no one imagine that he can by-pass any one of them and get into the higher class! If man desires to cross over the ocean of *samsara*, free himself from sorrow and misery, he should attain perfection in these virtues, and on such a man alone descends the grace of God.

God is the same to all. He does not consider anyone to be hateful or dear to Him. Those who worship Him with devotion, He is in them and they are in Him. So by acquiring good qualities, the devotee becomes dear to the Lord, and the Lord confers *Atmajnana* on him, and by it he attains *Moksha*. Each one of those qualities should be cultivated assiduously by all seekers.

Many may think that they have love for the Lord. That is not enough. They should know if they are the recipients of God's grace. They should examine themselves and find out what is standing in the way of His grace freely flowing into him. If God's grace is obtained every thing is obtained, for His grace destroys all ignorance in a flash. The Lord is perfectly clear when he declares that only those devotees are dear to Him, who possess the above-mentioned qualities (*Yo madbhaktah sa me priyah*).

Paramatma is the goal to be attained. The path to reach the goal is *sadhana*, practice. The Gita expounds more the practical side of *sadhana* than the goal to be attained. So it is known as a practical guide to self-realisation. In the Second Discourse,

the Lord has explained the nature and state of the man of steady wisdom (*Sthitaprajna*). Here the nature and qualities of the devotee are stated. In the following Discourse, He declares the qualities of the *Jnani*. Then *Daivisampath* is explained, starting with '*abhayam*' fearlessness. In this way, the practical side of religion is frequently emphasised by the Lord in various ways.

Let the aspirant think of these qualities and make them part and parcel of his life. The first is the absence of any trace of hatred towards any creature. There is no exception to this command. Love and kind feeling towads all creatures is the basic virtue of a *bhakta*.

Santushtah satatam : The devotee should be fully satisfied and contented. Discontent is a sign of imperfection. Under all circumstances the devotee should be fully at rest and peace with himself and the world.

Dhridhanischayah : Firm conviction in spiritual life is again an indispensable quality. The difficulty with most seekers is that the mind wavers in crucial moments of life. Doubt crops up about the truth as declared by the *Guru* and *Sastras*. Does God exist or not ? Such doubts cut at the very root of spiritual life. Firm conviction that Self-realisation is the goal of life is the foundation for all growth and advancement. No doubts and surmises and speculations ! All these are the 'tricks' of *Avidya* which somehow tries to bring down the aspirant into the world and bind him to the wheel of *samsara*.

Mayyarpita manobuddhih : The mind and the intellect should be absorbed in the Lord. The intellect being the deciding power, if it is not linked to the mind, the latter disintegrates with hundreds of doubts and fear. Firm decision and immovable faith are essential.

15. यस्मान्नोद्विजते लोको लोकान्नोद्विजते च यः ।
हर्षामर्षभयोद्वेगैर्मुक्तो यः स च मे प्रियः ॥ १५

Yasman no'dvijate loko lokan no'dvijate cha yah ।
harshamarshabhayodvegair mukto yah sa cha me priyah ॥ 15

Meaning : यस्मात् *yasmat* : from whom, लोकः *lokah* : the world (people), नोद्विजते *no dvijate* : is not agitated (with fear), लोकात् च *lokat cha* : and from the world (people), यः *yah* : who, न उद्विजते *na udvijate* : is not agitated with fear, यः *yah* : who, हर्षामर्षभयोद्वेगैः *harshamarshabhayodvegaih* : from fits of joy, hatred, fear, and anxiety, मुक्तः *muktah* : freed, सः च *sah cha* : he also, मे *me* : to Me, प्रियः *priyah* : is dear.

Substance : From whom the world (people) has no fear, and who from the world has no fear, who is freed from joy, envy, fear and anxiety, he is dear to Me.

Commentary : *Lokan no dvijate* : The devotee should not have any fear of the world. People may say hundred things to him and about him, he should not swerve from the path of truth and righteousness. "Be fearless" is the command. The Lord has already mentioned fearlessness (*vigatabhih*)-and declares it again as '*abhayam*.'

Harshamarshabhayodvegaih : To be free from these fits of joy, hatred, anxiety, fear-is to be almost perfect in spiritual realisation. All these are various mental modifications which cause misery to man. The devotee should be free from them. He should maintain equanimity of mind at all times (*samatvam yoga uchyate*).

16. अनपेक्षः शुचिर्दक्ष उदासीनो गतव्यथः ।
सर्वारम्भपरित्यागी यो मद्भक्तः स मे प्रियः ॥ १६

Anapekshah suchir daksha udasino gatavyathah ।
sarvarambha parityagi yo madbhaktah sa me priyah ॥ 16

Meaning : अनपेक्षः *anapekshah* : free from desires, शुचिः *suchih* : pure internally and externally, दक्षः *dakshah* : competent in action, expert, उदासीनः *udasinah* : unconcerned with any thing, गतव्यथः *gatavyathah* : untroubled, free from fear or sorrow, सर्वारम्भपरित्यागी *sarvarambhaparityagi* : removing

all sense of doership in undertakings (or renouncing all acts of desire, and actions prohibited by the Sastras), मद्भक्तः *madbhaktah* : My devotee, यः *yah* : who, सः *sah* : he, मे *me* : to Me, प्रियः *priyah* : is dear.

Substance : He who is free from desire, who is pure in body and mind, who is competent and ready-willed, who is unconcerned, free from anxiety and sorrow, who has renounced all sense of doership (or who has renounced all acts of desire, prohibited by the '*Sastras*'), who is devoted to Me–is dear to Me.

Commentary : *Suchih* : Purity is many times emphasised by the Lord. The devotee should be clean in body and mind, and the place where he lives should also be clean. Such purity of body is essential for purity of mind.

dakshah : He should be competent and ever alert in carrying out his '*sadhana*'. A moment's negligence is enough for '*maya*' to strike him down.

gatavyathah : Anxiety and fear are the two real enemies of all men. Having taken refuge with the Lord, it would be foolish for a devotee still to be anxious and struck with fear about anything in the world.

sarvarambhaparityagi : This does not mean that the devotee becomes dull and inactive. It means that he has renounced all sense of doership in all actions. Or it may mean that he has renounced all desire-prompted actions prohibited by the '*Sastras*'. Having given up the feeling of doership, though he is engaged in good work, still he is one who has not done anything.

17. यो न हृष्यति न द्वेष्टि न शोचति न काङ्क्षति ।
शुभाशुभपरित्यागी भक्तिमान्यः स मे प्रियः ॥ १७

Yo na hrisyati na dvesti na sochati na kankshati ।
subhasubha parityagi bhaktiman yah sa me priyah ॥ 17

Meaning : यः *yah* : who, न हृष्यति *na hrishyati* : is not elated, न द्वेष्टि *na dveshti* : is not hateful, न शोचति *na sochati* : not grieves, न काङ्क्षति *na kankshati* : has no desire, यः *yah* : who, शुभाशुभपरित्यागी *subhasubhaparityagi* : has renounced good and bad, सः भक्तिमान् *sah bhaktiman* : that devotee, मे *me* : to Me, प्रियः *priyah* : is dear.

Substance : Who is not elated, who does not hate, does not grieve, who has renounced both good and bad, he, My devotee is dear to Me.

Commentary : *na hrishyati* : The devotee is always calm and is not elated with pleasure or joy. Of course joy is a good quality, but here it refers to the unbalanced fits of elations which overtake the common man when good things come to him. Joy and sorrow are pairs of opposites (*dvandas*) which stand in the way of realisation. Unless the mind is freed from these pairs, firmness in self-realisation is impossible.

subhasubhaparityagi : This may give rise to a doubt for the reader. The way of the world is to give up '*asubha*' and hold on to '*subha*'. Here it is stated that both should be renounced. We must understand these statements continuously by studying the context of each of these thoughts. Here the ultimate goal of '*Bhakti*' is being declared. The final end of *Bhakti* and *Jnana* are the same. The perfect devotee and the perfect '*Jnani*', both have their life and being in the Divine, the *Atma*. This state is that of the '*Jivanmukta*' who has transcended all the modifications of the mind. In that state the pairs of opposites like heat and cold, pleasure and pain, joy and sorrow, good and bad, do not exist. Only the Divine, the *Atma* exists. So the perfect devotee is free from both good and bad. The seekers should take to '*subha*' first and eliminate '*asubha*', and then both should be given up. This is the thought-free ('*nirvikalpa*') state. '*Subha*' and '*asubha*' drop away in the ultimate stage when only the Divine appears eveywhere for the perfected devotee. This is the idea of *subhasubhaparityagi*, and not giving up good and auspicious actions.

18. समः शत्रौ च मित्रे च तथा मानावमानयोः।
शीतोष्णसुखदुःखेषु समः सङ्गविवर्जितः ॥ १८

19. तुल्यनिन्दास्तुतिर्मौनी संतुष्टो येन केनचित् ।
अनिकेतः स्थिरमतिर्भक्तिमान्मे प्रियो नरः ॥ १९

Samah satrau cha mitre cha tatha manavamanayoh ।
sitoshna sukha duhkheshu samah sangavivarjitah ॥ 18

Tulya ninda stutir mauni samtushto yena kenachit ।
aniketah sthiramatir bhaktiman me priyo narah ॥ 19

Meaning: शत्रौ च *satrau cha* : and towards enemies, मित्रे च *mitre cha* : and towards friends, तथा *tatha* : thus, मानावमानयोः *manavamanayoh* : in honour and shame, समः *samah* : the same, equal-minded, शीतोष्ण सुखदुःखेषु *sitoshnasukhaduhkheshu* : in heat and cold, pleasure and pain, समः *samah* : the same, equal-minded, सङ्ग विवर्जितः *sanga vivarjitah* : freed from attachment (mental), तुल्यनिन्दास्तुतिः *tulyanindastutih* : equal in praise and blame, मौनी *mauni* : silent (or meditating on God,) येनकेनचित् *yenakenachit* : by what-so-ever he gets, संतुष्टः *santushtah* : satisfied, अनिकेतः *aniketah* : without abode (not attached to home), स्थिरमतिः *sthiramatih* : decided in mind, भक्तिमान् *bhaktiman* : devoted to Me, नरः *narah* : man, मे *me* : to Me, प्रियः *priyah* : is dear.

Substance : Who is equal-minded towards friends and enemies, in honour and disgrace, in heat and cold, and pleasure and pain, who is free from attachment (desire and selfishness), who is silent (meditating), who is satisfied with what-so-ever he gets, who has no particular home, who is decided in mind, who is devoted to Me, such a man is dear to Me.

Commentary : Five pairs of opposites are mentioned in these two verses. (1) Friends and enemies, (2) Honour and dishonour, (3) Heat and cold, (4) Joy and sorrow, (5) Praise and blame. The devotee is expected to remain calm and equal-

minded when these pairs of opposites overtake him in the usual course of life.

mauni : Silence does not simply mean giving up talking. It means the stillness of the mind also. As the devotee is very much absorbed in thinking of the Lord, he is silent and does not expend his vocal energy in useless talk. Or it may be taken to mean, one whose mind is absorbed in the contemplation of the Divine.

aniketah : One who has no particular home is '*aniketah*'. He finds his home wherever he is. If he stays in one place, home or choultry, he may become attached to it by association. Or, the word '*niketa*' may be taken to mean 'body'. Then '*aniketa*' means one who has no body-idea (*dehabhimana*).

The qualities of a '*bhakta*' are so far mentioned. As one who is gifted with these thirty five qualities is said to be a '*Bhakta*', and as these qualities are also the attributes of a '*Jnani*', it is clear that in essence both devotion and knowledge are the same. The devotee at first worships with flowers and fruits. But as he evolves he offers the flower of his own mind to the Divinity pervading the whole universe.

Sankaracharya in his Sivanandalahari says that people have not yet learnt to offer the flower of their mind to the Lord and then remain in blissful quietude. Thus the real devotee evolves towards the higher form of worship with the mind. What are these flowers of the mind ? They are the thirty five virtues mentioned here.

Non-injury, self-restraint, universal love, forgiveness, peace, austerity, meditation, and truthfulness are most dear to Lord Vishnu. Therefore, along with natural flowers, it is necessary to worship the Lord with flowers of virtue and spiritual conduct. May all the seekers learn His higher form of worship and obtain God's grace.

Of all worldly things, the greatest and the most precious possession of man is the Lord's love, and such love cannot be attained except by the practice of the above-mentioned virtues.

Those whose conduct is hostile to Divine Command and the injunctions of the '*Sastras*' cannot hope to receive God's grace. It is self-delusion for any one to think that he is worshipping God, while his mind is beset with all foul and filthy passions and desires.

narah : The general term 'man' is used to indicate that all human beings are qualified for the divine state without any distinction what-so-ever.

Question : *What are the qualities of the devotee mentioned in this Discourse?*

Answer : Thirty five qualities are mentioned here (1) Absence of hatred towards all beings, (2) Friendliness, (3) Compassion, (4) The absence of 'Myness'. (5) Absence of egoism, (6) Equanimity in joy and sorrow, (7) Forbearance, (8) Contentment, (9) Self-control, (10) Firm determination, (11) Surrendering the mind and intellect to God, (12) Absence of fear either by him to the world or by the world to him, (13) Absence of elation, hatred and fear, (14) Desirelessness, (15) Purity, (16) Competence in action, (17) Indifference, (18) Freedom from anxiety, (19) Renunciation of the fruits of action, (20) Absence of elation, (21) Absence of hatred, (22) Absence of fear, (23) Absence of desire, (24) Renunciation of good and bad, (25) Equal mindedness towards friends and enemies, (26) Equanimity in honour and dishonour, (27) Equanimity in heat and cold, (28) Equanimity in joy and sorrow, (29) Non-attachment, (30) Equalmindedness in praise and blame, (31) Silence, (32) Contentment with what-so-ever obtained by chance, (33) Absence of attachment to home, (34) Firmness of decision, (35) Devotion to God.

Question : *Who is dear to the Lord?*

Answer : He who possesses the above virtues is dear to the Lord

Question : *What then is the way to obtain God's grace?*

Answer : The possession of these virtues alone draws God's grace.

The Lord declares the fruits of sadhana in the last verse of this Discourse.

20. ये तु धर्म्यामृतमिदं यथोक्तं पर्युपासते ।
श्रद्दधाना मत्परमा भक्तास्तेऽतीव मे प्रियाः ॥ २०

Ye tu dharmyamritam idam yathoktam paryupasate
sraddadhana matparama bhaktaste'tiva me priyah 20

Meaning : ये तु *ye tu* : those indeed, श्रद्दधानाः *sraddhadhana* : with faith, मत्परमाः *matparamah* : having Me as their goal (loving Me,) इदम् *idam* : this, धर्म्यामृतम् *dharmyamritam* : the nectar of Dharma, (of Moksha), यथोक्तं *yathoktam* : as declared above, पर्युपासते *paryupasate* : follow, practice, ते भक्ताः *te bhaktah* : these devotees, मे *me* : to Me, अतीव *ativa* : very much, most, प्रियाः *priyah* : (are) dear.

Substance : Who, with faith having Me as their goal follow this immortal and nectar-like *Dharma* as declared above, such devotees are most dear to Me.

Commentary : The Lord declares the fruit of practising this immortal *Dharma*. It is natural that people wish to know the reward of spiritual *sadhana*. It strengthens their faith and prompts them to act. Therefore the Lord proclaims the reward. What is it? '*te ativa me priyah*'. "Such devotees are most dear to Me."-says the Lord. That is the reward. What else does man require? Having the Lord's grace man has every thing, and not having it, man has nothing (though he may possess wealth and kingship even). The Lord's grace leads to freedom and perfection (*Moksha*). By His Grace, man acquires '*buddhi yoga*' (the intellectual keenness to know the essence of things and hold on to truth) and by it, he attains *Moksha*.

Dharmyamritam: This *Dharma* is spoken of as 'nectar' (immortal) because it takes man from death to immortality. Man is transformed into the Immortal Being. Such is the power of this *Dharma*. The Lord has showered 'nectar' and it is the duty of man to collect it in the vessels of their own minds and

drink deep this spiritual drink of God. Those who fail to do so are miserable men and they suffer horrid thirst in the desert sands of worldly life.

Sraddhadhanah: How should this *Dharana* be practised? With faith. The Lord has emphasised faith a hundred times in the course of His teaching. Moreover, the devotee should be perfectly convinced that the Lord is his goal (*matparamah*). When the disciple carries out the teacher's injunctions faithfully, the latter is full of confidence about the future prospects of his student. When the father takes care of the child in his arms, the child has no fear. So also, the devotee who has won God's grace need not have any fear about his life and spiritual fulfilment. Therefore let all the aspirants strive to obtain these virtues and attain freedom.

"*Ye tu*"-it is clear that no one is prohibited from obtaining God's grace by following the eternal '*Dharma*'.

Question : *What is the 'Dharma' taught by Lord Krishna ?*

Answer : It is Immortal, and takes man out of the wheel of birth and death.

Question : *How should man follow it ?*

Answer : With faith and deep devotion.

Question : *What is the reward ?*

Answer : Such a devotee is most dear to the Lord.

इति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे
श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे भक्तियोगो नाम
द्वादशोऽध्यायः ॥

Iti Srimad Bhagavadgitasupanishatsu brahmavidyayam yogasastre Sri Krishnarjuna samvade Bhakti yogo nama dvadaso'dhyayah

Thus, in the Upanishads of the glorious Bhagavad Gita, in the Science of the Eternal, in the Scripture of Yoga, in the dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna ends the Twelth Discourse entitled
Bhakti Yoga

(The Yoga of Devotion.)

ॐ

श्री भगवद्गीता

SRI BHAGAVAD GITA

अथ त्रयोदशोऽध्यायः

Atha trayodasodhyayah

THE THIRTEENTH DISCOURSE

क्षेत्रक्षेत्रज्ञविभागयोगः

KSHETRAKSHETRAJNAVIBHAGA YOGA

THE YOGA OF DIVISON

BETWEEN THE FIELD AND ITS KNOWER.

I. The title of the Discourse :

'*Kshetra*' means the body, and *Kshetrajna* means the Knower of the body, *Atma*. The *Jiva* is not the *Kshetra*; he is verily *Kshetrajna*. But by ignorance he has identified himself with the body and so suffers endless misery. The body (*Kshetra*) is composed of the five elements, changing and perishable. The Knower of the Field is the Self, omniscient, eternal, and changeless. In this Discourse, the distinction between the *Kshetra* and *Kshetrajna* is distincty shown and how to differentiate between the two which are intermingled, is clearly explained. So it is entitled *Kshetrakshetrajnavibhaga Yoga*.

II. Important points of the Discourse :

1) An account of the nature of the *Kshetra* and *Kshetrajna*. (1–7)

2) The qualities of the *Jnani* (8–12)

3) The enunciation of that which is to be known (13–18)

4) Distinction between *Prakriti* and *Purusha*. (19–35)

III. How this Discourse is connected with the previous one :

In the 12th Discourse, the Lord taught Arjuna the worship of the deity (*Saguna*) and the qualities of the devotee. He has not touched fully upon the nature of *Nirguna Brahman* or the philosophic discrimination of knowledge (*Jnana*). After Arjuna was taught how to be a '*Bhakta*', how to obtain God's grace, how to worship, how to surrender himself to God, the Lord now explains the position of *Jnana* and the *Jnani*. Arjuna was eager to know the truth about the body and the Knower of the body. He questions the Lord about '*Kshetra*' and '*Kshetrajna*'. In answer to the devotees question, the Lord gives a full and complete explanation of the highest philosophic Truth and Self-realisation. The Discourse starts with Arjuna's question.

अर्जुन उवाच

1. प्रकृतिं पुरुषं चैव क्षेत्रं क्षेत्रज्ञमेव च ।
एतद्वेदितुमिच्छामि ज्ञानं ज्ञेयं च केशव ॥ १

Arjuna uvacha

Prakritim purusham chai'va kshetram kshetrajnam eva cha ।
etad veditum icchami jnanam jneyam cha kesava । 1

अर्जुन उवाच *Arjuna uvacha :* Arjuna said.

Meaning : केशव *Kesava :* O Krishna! प्रकृतिम् *prakritim :* prakriti, पुरुषम् च एव *purusham cha eva :* and also purusha, क्षेत्र *kshetram :* the field, क्षेत्रज्ञम् एव च *kshetrajnam eva cha :* and the knower of the field also, ज्ञानम् *jnanam:* knowledge, ज्ञेयम् च *jneyam cha :* and the object to be known (Paramatma), एतत् *etat:* (all) this, वेदितुम् *veditum:* to know, इच्छामि *icchami:* I wish.

Substance : Arjuna said–O Krishna! *Prakriti* and *Purusha*, *kshetra* and *kshetrajna*, knowledge and the object to be known, all this I desire to know.

Commentary : Arjuna now questions the Lord about the attributeless *Brahma*. In the Gita, the first six chapters (1–6) are known as '*Karmashtakam*' dealing with *karmayoga*; the second six chaptres (7–13) are known as '*Bhaktishtakam*' dealing with '*Bhakti*'; and the last six chapters (13–18) are known as '*Jnashtakam*' dealing with '*Jnana*'. So in this Discourse, the subject of knowledge is taken up for detailed investigation. For the aspirant in the '*Jnanamarga*', this Discourse is of great importance.

Question : *What is Arjuna's question* ?

Answer : He desires to know 'Prakriti' and 'Purusha', 'Kshetra' and 'Kshetrajna', 'Jnana' and 'Jneya'.

The Lord answers Arjuna's question in detail, elaborately :

श्री भगवानुवाच

2. इदं शरीरं कौन्तेय क्षेत्रमित्यभिधीयते ।
एतद्यो वेत्ति तं प्राहुः क्षेत्रज्ञ इति तद्विदः ॥

Sri Bhagavan uvacha

Idam sariram kaunteya kshetram ityabhidhiyate ।
etad yo vetti tam prahuh kshetrajna iti tadvidah ॥ 2

श्री भगवानुवाच *Sri Bhaghavan Uvacha* : The blessed Lord said.

Meaning : कौन्तेय *kaunteya* : O Arjuna! इदं शरीरम् *idam sariram* : this body, क्षेत्रम् *kshetram* : the field, इति *iti* : thus, अभिधीयते *abhidhiyate* : is said, एतत् *etat* : this, यः *yah* : who, वेत्ति *vetti* : knows, तम् *tam* : Him, क्षेत्रज्ञः इति *kshetrajna iti* : as the knower of the field, तत् विदः *tat vidah* : knower of that, प्राहुः *prahuh* : say.

Substance : The Blessed Lord said ; O Arjuna ! this body is called the field (*kshetra*); He who knows the field is known as the knower of the field (*kshetrajna*); the wise who know both declare so.

Commentary : '*Kshetram*' means field. The field is necessary for growing corn and other things to sustain the beings of the world. So also the body is necessary for the growth of the seed of knowledge in the heart of man. All '*sadhana*', '*tapas*', thinking and meditation–all this is to be done with the body. So the body, the '*kshetra*', is the field for the growth of the seed of '*Dharma*' as well as '*Jnana*'. Therefore it is called '*kshetra*'.

The body being inert ('*Jada*') does not know itself; There is a consciousness within with power to cognise the body. This consciousness power is known as '*kshetrajna*.' He is '*Pratyagatma*'. He is the witness of the combined elements of the body, senses and the mind. He is changeless, pure, intelligence, deathless, separate from the five sheaths ('*Pancha-kosas*'). What is inert cannot know itself. The wall does not know that it is a wall, nor does a pot know that it is a pot. It is the intelligence that has the power of cognition. That Intelligence is the Knower of the body. He knows. He ('*kshetrajna*') is pure Intelligence.

The knower of the field is certainly different from the field. So the knower of the body should certainly be distinct from the body. Though the Intelligence is in the body, yet it remains free and perfect, witnessing the modifications of the body and mind during all the three states wakefulness '*Jagrat*', dream '*Svapna*' and sleep '*Sushupti*'.

Question : *What is Kshetra* ?

Answer : This body, this vehicle (Upadhi) is the ***Kshetra***.

Question ; *Who is the kshetrajna* ?

Answer : Pure Intelligence (*Pratyagatma*) is the knower of the field.

The Lord declares that He is the knower (kshetrajna) in all the fields.

3\. क्षेत्रज्ञं चापि मां विद्धि सर्वक्षेत्रेषु भारत ।
क्षेत्रक्षेत्रज्ञयोर्ज्ञानं यत्तज्ज्ञानं मतं मम ॥ ३

Kshetrajnam cha'pi mam viddhi
sarva kshetreshu bharata ।
kshetra kshetrajnayor jnanam
yat tat jnanam matam mama ॥ 3

Meaning : भारत *bharata :* O Arjuna! सर्वक्षेत्रेषु *sarva-kshetreshu :* in all the fields (bodies), माम् *mam :* Me, क्षेत्रज्ञम् च अपि *kshetrajnam cha api :* as also the knower of the field, विद्धि *viddhi :* know, क्षेत्रक्षेत्रज्ञयोः *kshetrakshetrajnayoh :* of the field and its knower, ज्ञानम् *jnanam :* knowledge, यत् *yat :* which, तत् *tat :* that, ज्ञानम् *jnanam :* (is) knowledge, मम *mama :* My, मतम् *matam :* opinion.

Substance : O Arjuna! Know Me as the *kshetrajna* (Knower) in all the *kshetras* (bodies); Knowledge of the *kshetra* and *kshetrajna* is real Knowledge, according to My opinion.

Commentary : In this verse, the Lord teaches the *Mahavakya 'tat tvam asi'* (Thou art That). In the second Discourse in the verse *'Na tvevaham jatu nasam'* (2-12), the Lord has already taught the *Mahavakya*, the highest truth. The *Jiva* is no other than Siva. The *Jiva* (really *Pratyagatman*) is the Knower of the field, the witness to the modifications of the body and mind, and this *Jiva* is not distinct from *Paramatma*, is actually one with Him. "Know Me as the Knower of the body in all the bodies". So the *Jiva* who is the Knower in a particular body is *Paramatma* Himself, who is also the knower in every body. There is therefore only one Knower and He is functioning in every body as the witness. The Lord Himself is the Knower in all the bodies. The *'Jiva'* is only a fictitious entity and has no real existence at all apart from the Lord. To know this Truth fully and finally is the highest achievement of man.

This knowledge gives to every man the greatest strength and courage. Why should one weep and wail? Why should he suffer the miseries of life? Let him remember that the Lord is actually, directly present in him. This is the truth. No other kind of knowledge except this can give man supreme joy and blissfulness. Knowledge of the sciences, arts and politics, is incomplete and one-sided. There is no perfection in them. There is no finality in them. They keep man where he is. This knowledge of the *kshetrajna* transforms man into a Divine Being. He understands the tremondous mystery of the human personality.

Sarvakshetreshu : Lord Krishna declares Himself to be *Paramatma* present in every being. He is the basis, the foundation of all. In all human beings irrespective of caste, creed, race, sex and nationality, and in all animals, reptiles and worms, in every body the Lord is present as the One Cognising Power. All the rest is *'Jada'*, except the Lord.

The splendid declaration of the Lord should be thought of, meditated upon, and realised by every seeker.

Question : *Who is it that functions as the Cognising Intelligence in all bodies?*

Answer : He is Lord Himself, *Paramatma.*

Question : *Where does then Paramatma exist?*

Answer : He exists in the heart of every being, as the eternal witness.

Question : *Does He exist in certain bodies only?*

Answer : No. In all *kshetras*,-man, animal, bird, reptile etc., he exists.

Question : *What is the nature of the Lord?*

Answer : He is not a *'jada'*, or nothingness. He is pure intelligence. So He is the one *kshetrajna* in all beings.

Question : *What is true Knowledge in the world?*

Answer : That knowledge which enables man to distinguish the body from the knower of the body, the *'Drik'* from

the 'Drishya' is true knowledge—That is the Lord's declaration.

The Lord elaborates the theme of kshetra and kshetrajna.

4. तत्क्षेत्रं यच्च यादृक्च यद्विकारि यतश्च यत् ।
स च यो यत्प्रभावश्च तत्समासेन मे शृणु ॥ ४

Tat kshetram yaccha yadrik cha yadvikari yatas cha yat ।
sa cha yo yat prabhavas cha tat samasena me srinu ॥ 4

Meaning : तत् क्षेत्रम् *tat kshetram :* that Field, यत् च *yat cha :* and what (it is), यादृक्च *yadrik cha :* and how (it is), यत् विकारि *yat vikari:* how it changes, यतः च यत् *yatah cha yat :* and from what, and how (it) arises, सः च *sah cha :* and he (the knower of the Field), यः *yah :* who, यत् प्रभावः च *yat prabhavah cha :* and what power, तत् *tat :* that, समासेन *samasena :* in brief, मे *me :* from Me, शृणु *srunu :* hear.

Substance : That *kshetra*-what it is, how it is, how it changes, and from what and how it is born, and the *kshetrajna*, who He is, and of what power,—all this in brief hear from Me.

Commentary : The essence of what the Lord has to say is already stated here. The *kshetra* is *(Vikari)* changing, and the *kshetrajna*, the Lord is of great power (*Prabhavah*). Unchanging really the body is subject to innumerable changes every minute, whereas *Paramatma* is unchanging, eternal and all-powerful.

Samasena srunu : The Lord is brief in his declarations, as He is speaking on the field of battle, and there is no time for endless philosophical speculations. The Gita is thus the very essence of *Brahma Jnana* stated in perfect clarity and brevity.

The Lord eulogises the knowledge of kshetra and kshetrajna.

5. ऋषिभिर्बहुधा गीतं छन्दोभिर्विविधैः पृथक् ।
ब्रह्मसूत्रपदैश्चैव हेतुमद्भिर्विनिश्चितैः ॥ ५

Rishibhir bahudha gitam chandobhir vividhaih prithak ।
brahmasutrapadais chai'va hetumadbhir vinischitaih । 5

Meaning : ऋषिभिः *rishibhih :* by the sages, बहुधा *bahudha :* in many ways, पृथक् *prithak :* separately, विविधैः *vividhaih :* in various ways, छन्दोभिः *chandobhih :* by the Vedas, गीतं *gitam :* established, हेतुमद्भिः *hetumadbhih :* with rational arguments, विनिश्चितैः *vinischitaih :* decided, ब्रह्मसूत्रपदैः च एव *brahmasutra padaih cha eva :* and also by the words of the Brahmasutras.

Substance : This knowledge of (*kshetra* and *kshetrajna*) is established by the sages in many ways and by the *Vedas* in various distinct hymns; and is declared by the decisive arguments of the *Brahmasutras* also.

Commentary : *Rishibhirbahudhagitam* : *Rishi* means a sage who has conquered the senses, and who has attained *Brahmajnana*. What they say is the very essence of all things and they have established this '*Jnana*' in various ways. It is clear that this knowledge has come down to us from great Rishis.

Hetumadbhirvinischitaih : The *Brahmasutras* of *Vyasa* are not fictitious creations of fancy and imagination. They are scientific and logical statements proved and declared by subtle intellectual and analytical reasoning. The modern man who claims rational thinking as his special privilege will find enough argumentative power and conclusive reasoning in every part of the *Brahmasutras*. That is why it is said '*vinischitaih*'-conclusively proved. Not only is this knowledge obtained by reasoning but directly apprehended by them through personal experience. It is the highest truth and there is nothing beyond it.

The kshetra (the Field) is described in two verses.

6. महाभूतान्यहङ्कारो बुद्धिरव्यक्तमेव च ।
इन्द्रियाणि दशैकं च पञ्च चेन्द्रियगोचराः ॥ ६

7. इच्छा द्वेषः सुखं दुःखं सङ्घातश्चेतना धृतिः ।
एतत्क्षेत्रं समासेन सविकारमुदाहृतम् ॥ ७

Mahabhutany ahamkaro buddhir avyaktam eva cha ।
indriyani dasai'kam cha pancha che'ndriyagocharah । 6

Iccha dveshah sukham duhkham
samghatas chetana dhritih
etat kshetram samasena
savikaram udahritam ॥ 7

Meaning: महाभूतानि *mahabhutani :* the five great elements, अहङ्कारः *ahamkarah :* egoism, बुद्धिः *buddih :* intellect, अव्यक्तम् च एव *avyaktam cha eva :* and also the unmanifested (Mula Prakriti), दश एकम् च इन्द्रियाणि *dasa ekam cha indriyani :* the ten external and internal senses and the mind (eleven), इन्द्रियगोचराः पञ्चच *indriya gocharah pancha cha :* and the five objects of the senses (sound, colour, etc.), इच्छा *iccha :* desire, द्वेषः *dveshah :* dislike, सुखम् *sukham :* pleasure (of the senses), दुःखम् *dukham :* pain, sorrow, सङ्घातः *samghatah :* the aggregate of the body and the senses, चेतना *chetana :* intelligence, (Vritti Jnana), धृतिः *dhritih :* fortitude, एतत् *etat :* thus, सविकारं *savikaram :* with modifications, क्षेत्रम् *kshetram :* the field, समासेन *samasena:* briefly, उदाहृतम् *udahritam:* is described.

Substance: The five great elements, the ego, intellect, '*mulaprakriti*', the ten senses and the mind, the five sense-objects like sound, touch etc., desire, dislike, pleasure, sorrow, the aggregate of the body of the senses, intelligence (*VrittiJnana*), fortitude, - all this together with modifications is briefly described as '*kshetram*'.

Commentary: '*Kshetram*' does not simply mean the physical body alone. All that is perceived (*drisya*) is the Field. The five elements, mind and intellect and the unmanifested '*Mulaprakriti*' also come within the concept of the Field. As the mind also is '*kshetram*', its modifications like desire and hatred, pleasure and pain, etc., also come under *kshetram*. Not only the bad modifications but good qualities of the mind like

fortitude (*dhriti*) are also included in *kshetram*. In the highest state (*nirvikalpa Atma* state) when *Atma* is experienced, the good and the bad are both left behind.

savikaram: The entire *kshetram* which is *Drisya* is subject to constant change. The *kshetrajna* (*Drik*, the seer) alone is changeless.

'*Sukham*'-happiness, usually understood by people, is also *Drisya* (*kshetram*) and subject to change. So instead of clinging to a changing and momentary happiness, man should seek for the unchanging bliss of *Atma*.

The wise man has to reject all that is *Drisya* both external, and internal. Thoughts are *drisya*, pleasure and pain are *drisya*, likes and dislikes are *drisya*, cowardice and courage are *drisya*– in fact all that comes within our comprehension is *drisya*–(*kshetram*). The wise man should not identify himself with these bodily and mental modifications. He should remain as *kshetrajna*, the witness of these changes. Thus, he attains the established state in *Atma*.

This Knowledge, is obtained through discrimination between *Atma* and *Anatma*. All that is *Anatma* is *kshetram*–the Field, and *Atma* is the *kshetrajna*, the knower of the field. The seeker has to carry on this discriminatory process constantly till he is firmly established in the Self.

Question : *What is Kshetram* ?

Answer : (1) The five great elements, (2) egoism (3) intellect, (4) 'Mula Prakriti', (5) The ten internal and external sense organs and the mind, (6) the five sense-objects, (7) desire, (8) dislike, (9) sense-enjoyments, (10) sorrow, (11) the aggregate of the body and the senses, (12) intelligence (Vritti Jnanam), (13) fortitude.

In five verses, the Lord declares the qualities of Jnana.

8. अमानित्वमदम्भित्वमहिंसा क्षान्तिरार्जवम् ।
आचार्योपासनं शौचं स्थैर्यमात्मविनिग्रहः ॥

9. इन्द्रियार्थेषु वैराग्यमनहङ्कार एव च ।
जन्ममृत्युजराव्याधिदुःखदोषानुदर्शनम् ॥ ९

10. असक्तिरनभिष्वङ्गः पुत्रदारगृहादिषु ।
नित्यं च समचित्तत्वमिष्टानिष्टोपपत्तिषु ॥ १०

11. मयि चानन्ययोगेन भक्तिरव्यभिचारिणी ।
विविक्तदेशसेवित्वमरतिर्जनसंसदि ॥ ११

12. अध्यात्मज्ञाननित्यत्वं तत्त्वज्ञानार्थदर्शनम् ।
एतज्ज्ञानमिति प्रोक्तमज्ञानं यदतोऽन्यथा ॥ १२

Amanitvam adambhitvam ahimsa kshantir arjavam ।
acharyopasanam saucham sthairyam atmavinigrahah ॥ 8

Indriyartheshu vairagyam anahamkara eva cha ।
Janma mrityu jara vyadhi duhkha doshanudarsanam ॥ 9

Asaktir anabhishvangah putra dara grihadishu ।
nityam cha samachittatvam istanistopapattishu ॥ 10

Mayi cha'nanyayogena bhaktir avyabhicharini ।
vivikta desa sevitvam aratir janasamsadi ॥ 11

Adhyatma jnana nityatvam tattva jnanartha darsanam ।
etajjnanam iti proktam ajnanam yad ato'nyatha ॥ 12

Meaning: अमानित्वम् *amanitvam* : humility, absense of self-glorification, अदम्भित्वम् *adambhitvam* : unpretentiousness, अहिंसा *ahimsa* : non-injury, not doing any harm to other beings either by word, thought or deed, क्षान्तिः *kshantih* : forbearance, आर्जवम् *arjavam* : rectitude, uprightness, आचार्योपासनम् *acharyopasanam* : service of the Teacher, शौचम् *saucham* : purity (internal and external), स्थैर्यम् *sthairyam* : steadiness, आत्मविनिग्रहः *atmavinigrahah* : self-control, इन्द्रियार्थेषु *indriyardheshu* : of sense objects, वैराग्यम् *vairagyam* : dispassion, अनहङ्कारः एव च *anahamkarah evacha* : and also absence of egoism, जन्म मृत्यु जराव्याधि दुःख दोषानुदर्शनम् *janma*

mrityu jaravyathi duhkha doshanu darsanam : clear understanding of the sorrow and evil of birth, death, old age and disease, पुत्रदारगृहादिषु *putradaragrihadishu* : in son, wife, home and other possessions, असक्तिः *asaktih* : non-attachment, अनभिष्वङ्गः *anabhishvangah* : non-identification of self with the persons and things mentioned above, इष्टानिष्टोपपत्तिषु *ishtonishtopapathishu* : in desirable and undesirable occurrences, नित्यम् *nityam* : always, समचित्तत्वम् च *sama chittatvam cha* : and equal-mindedness, मयि *mayi* : in Me, अनन्ययोगेन *ananyayogena* : by the yoga of non-separation, अव्यभिचारिणी *avyabhicharini* : unswerving, भक्तिः *bhaktih* : devotion, विविक्तदेशसेवित्वम् *vivikta-desasevitam* : resorting to solitude, जनसंसदि *janasamsadi* : for the society of men, अरतिः *aratih* : distaste, अध्यात्मज्ञान नित्यत्वम् *adhyatmajnana nityatvam* : constancy of Self-knowledge, तत्त्वज्ञानार्थ दर्शनम् *tatvajnanartha darsanam* : perception of the end of true knowledge, एतत् *etat* : (all) this, ज्ञानम् *jnanam* : knowledge, इति *iti* : thus, प्रोक्तम् *proktam* : is declared, यत् *yat* : what (is), अतः अन्यथा *atah anyatha* : opposed to this, अज्ञानम् *ajnanam* : (is) ignorance.

Substance: Absence of self-glorification, absence of pretension, non-injury, fortitude, uprightness, service to teacher, purity, firmness, self-control,—dispassion towards sense-objects, absence of egoism, rememberence of the evil sand sorrows of birth, death, old age, and pain,—non-attachment and non-identification with son, wife, house etc., constant equal-mindedness during desirable and undesirable occurrences,—unswerving devotion to Me by the *yoga* of non-separation, resorting to solitary places, distaste for the society of men,—constancy of Self-knowledge, perception of the true end of Knowledge, - all this is *jnanam*, and what is opposed to it is ignorance (*ajnanam*).

Commentary : In this Discourse, both knowledge and the object of Knowledge are explained. The moral and spiritual qualities needed for Self-realisation are stated as Knowledge (*Jnanam*) here. Without perfect command of these qualities, no one can attain *Paramatma*. When the mirror is pure, the reflection is clear, not otherwise. Thus when the mind is purified by spiritual qualities, the Self is clearly reflected in it. So the seeker has to cultivate these qualities of *jnanam* first, and the self-existent *Paramatman* is revealed spontaneously without any effort on the part of man. All effort, all practice, all '*sadhana*' is needed to purify the mind by acquisition of these moral and spiritual qualities. There ends all effort. The realisation of *Paramatman* occurs by itself. No effort is needed. Twenty spiritual qualities are mentioned here. The seeker has to understand each one of them and make them all part of his own personality.

acharyopasanam : Service to the *Guru* is an essential factor in spiritual life. Without the benediction of God and *Guru*, no advancement is possible. Knowledge of *Atma* is attained by their grace. (Vide 4-34).

saucham : Purity both internal and external is another essential factor of spiritual life. The mind and body should be washed clean of all their dirt and foul passions.

sthairyam : The seeker should be firm, determined and resolute. His decision should be unalterable. The views and opinions of worldly men should not be allowed to loosen the firmness of one's own conviction about spiritual truth.

atmavinigrahah : Here the word *Atman* stands for senses and mind. They should be thoroughly brought under control, without any fear of rebellion from them at any time. The power of *Maya* can easily trap up a man, if his self-control is partial or inadequate.

indriyartheshu vairagyam : Dispassion for sense-objects is the test of a *jnani*. The man of knowledge is never tempted by the attractions of the sense-world. If the mind runs after sense-pleasures, it cannot be brought to rest in the Self. Meditation is

not possible. The seeker has to develop '*vairagya*' as the very life element of spiritual progress. He should turn the mind inwards to look into the Self by withdrawing it from its usual wanderings in the objective world.

janmamrityu jaravyadhi dukha doshanudarsanam : Generally people are able to understand the evils of old age, disease and death. But they do not understand the evils of birth. When a child is born people feel happy. But the Lord here says that birth itself is evil and sorrowful. Because all the ensuing ills and miseries of life come after birth. When there is no birth, there is no body; when there is no body there is no old age or disease or death. That is why both birth and death are said to form the cycle of '*samsara*'. The man who desires to escape death, should also avoid birth. One cannot be had without the other. The true aspirant thinks deeply and sees clearly (*anudarsanam*) all the evils arising from material life. By such contemplation he developes a deep inspiration to transcend these evils by every means possible. He finds ultimately that he is not the body, but *Atma*, the unborn and deathless, free from all the modifications of body and mind. Thus he transcends death. This habit of the mind to see the evils of life and death is of utmost importance in the path of knowledge.

asaktir anabhishvangah putradaragrihadishu : The house-holders should think of this aspect of *jnana*. He should understand that these things like wife and children, positions and possessions, do not really belong to him. It does not mean that he should abandon them. The idea is that there should not be any mental attachment for them. He should realise that he has nothing to do with them, though externally he discharges all the duties of a house-holder.

samachittatvam : Equanimity of mind under all circumstances is again the essence of *jnana*. The wise man is constant and steady whatever may happen, because he knows that he is not the *kshetra*, but the *kshetrajna*. So he is indifferent to joy or sorrow, good fortune or ill-fate.

bhaktiravyabhicharini : The Lord mentions devotion to Him as one of the qualities of Knowledge. This devotion should be constant and continuous, and it should not be diverted towards any other object in the world. Though in the beginning, such single-minded devotion is not possible, yet by resolute practice he should attain that state when the mind rests steadfast in the Lord, and does not move away from Him.

viviktadesa sevitvam : In the early stages the company of worldly-minded people causes great distraction (*vikshepa*), and so the seeker is required to resort to solitary places for silent thinking and meditation. It is quite possible to create such silence and solitude in one's own house by keeping a room separately for purposes of study and meditation. As the seeker advances, he takes to silence and solitude naturally.

aratirjanasamsadi : The company of indifferent people should be avoided. '*Satsang*' is always desirable.

adhyatmajnana nityatvam : Constancy of Divine contemplation and knowledge is taught here. The light of knowledge should be steady and bright in the heart always. If the light is extinguished, darkness immediately envelops the heart of man. When *jnana* is lost, *ajnana* enters at once. When *ajnana* is put off, *jnana* dawns at once. They are like light and darkness. When the one is, the other is not. The seekers should remember the Lord's instruction and try to be aware of the truth at all times. Such awareness keeps off '*avidya*' from possessing the heart of man.

tatvajnanartha darsanam : Direct experience of the truth is one of the important qualities of a *jnani*. It is not speculation or logic or argument, but actual perception of *Atma*, which is *Brahmajnana*.

ajnanam yadatonyatha : What is ignorance ? What is not *jnana* is gnorance. The Lord need not explain what ignorance is. Everybody knows it already. Pride and arrogance, selfishness, envy and jealousy, ill-will, hatred and a host of evil passions, desires, hopes and fears which beset the mind constitue ignorance.

Question : *What are the qualities of a jnani and how many are they ?*

Answer : They are twenty—1) Absence of self-glorification, 2) absence of pretention, 3) non-injury, 4) fortitude, 5) uprightness, 6) service to teacher 7) purity, 8) firmness, 9) self-control, 10) dispassion towards sense-objects, 11) absence of egoism, 12) remembrance of the evils and sorrows of birth, death, old age and pain, 13) non-attachment, 14) non-identification with sons, wife, house etc., 15) constant equal-mindedness during desirable and undesirable occurrences, 16) unswerving devotion to the Lord by the yoga of non-separation, 17) resorting to solitary places, 18) distaste for the society of men, 19) constancy of Self-knowledge, 20) perception of the true end of knowledge. These are the qualities of a *jnani*.

Having spoken of jnanam, the Lord explains the jneyam (that which is to be known) in six verses :

13. ज्ञेयं यत्तत्प्रवक्ष्यामि यज्ज्ञात्वाऽमृतमश्नुते ।
अनादिमत्परं ब्रह्म न सत्तन्नासदुच्यते ॥ १३

Jneyam yat tat pravakshyami yajjnatva'mritam asnute ।
anadimat param brahma na sat tan na'sad uchyate ॥ 13

Meaning : यत् *yat* : what, ज्ञेयम् *jneyam* : to be known (Brahman), यत् *yat* : what, ज्ञात्वा *jnatva* : having known, अमृतम् *amritam* : immortality Moksha, अश्नुते *asnute* : (man) attains तत् *tat* : that, प्रवक्ष्यामि *pravakshyami* : (I) will tell, अनादिमत् *anadimat* : beginningless, परम् ब्रह्म *param brahma* : supreme Brahman, तत् *tat* : that, सत् *sat* : existence, न उच्यते *na uchyate* : is not said, असत् *asat* : non-existence, न *na* (*uchyate*) : is not said.

Substance : That which is *Brahman* to be known, knowing which man attains immortality, that (*Brahman*) I will tell; that

beginningless supreme *Brahman* is not said to be existence or non-existence.

Commentary : From this verse onwards in six verses the Lord explains the nature of that which is to be known, the supreme Brahman. The former verses (8-12) dealt with knowledge and its qualities. But that is not enough. Knowledge of what ? What is it that the man of wisdom knows ? What does knowledge lead to ? What is that to be known ? These questions are answered now by the Lord. Having abandoned bad qualities, the aspirant acquires good qualities, and then abandoning both, he attains the supreme Brahman. This is the state of perfection. All the other states are imperfect.

Some of the religions are content with the teaching of ethical principles and a moral code of conduct. It is good in itself, but that is not enough. The aspisant should purify himself by ethical conduct, and then find his identity with the Supreme. That is the ultimate goal. There is no resting ground anywhere below that state. Therefore in the Gita, the Lord takes his disciple to the highest rung of the spiritual ladder and leaves him there—the *Advaita* realisation of *Nirguna* Brahman. The Gita explains *Dvaita, Visishtadvaita* and *Advaita* one after another and so it is said to be the one complete spiritual *Sastra.*

Pravakshyami : The enthusiam of the Lord in this spiritual teaching is indicated by this word.

Amritam asnute : The reward of the Brahman is stated even at the beginning—the reward is Immortality. Knowing this, the seeker is inspired with zeal to move forward towards the goal–Immortality, *Moksha*, Perfection ! That is the reward. Why should man cling to wretched perishable stuff and exhaust his precious life in animal activities, when there is Perfection awaiting him at the end of this '*sadhana*' ?

nasaduchyate : The supreme Brahman is not an object of sense-perception. That is the idea of '*na sat*' (not existence). It does not mean that it has not existence. A body exists and when it dies it ceases to exist. This is true of all objects. But Brahman is not said to exist or not exist in this sense. It is beyond existence and non-existence.

14\. सर्वतः पाणिपादं तत्सर्वतोऽक्षिशिरोमुखम् ।
सर्वतः श्रुतिमल्लोके सर्वमावृत्य तिष्ठति ॥ १४

Sarvatah panipadam tat sarvato'kshisiromukham ।
sarvatah srutimal loke sarvam avritya tishtati ॥ 14

Meaning : तत् *tat* : that (Brahman Atma), सर्वतः *sarvatah* : everywhere, पाणिपादम् *panipadam* : having hands and feet, सर्वतः *sarvatah* : everywhere, अक्षिशिरोमुखम् *akshisiromukham* : havings eyes, heads and faces, सर्वतः *sarvatah* : everywhere, श्रुतिमत् *srutimat* : having ears, लोके *loke* : in the universe, सर्वम् *sarvam* : all, आवृत्य *avritya* : having pervaded, तिष्ठति *tishtati* : is.

Substance : That (Brahman *Atma*), having hands and legs everywhere, and everywhere haing eyes, heads and faces, and having ears everywhere, exists in the Universe, having pervaded all.

Commentary : Brahman is described as having eyes, ears, hands and feet etc. everywhere, and as pervading the entire Universe. All that men does is witnessed directly by *Paramatma* and so it is man's duty to follow *Dharma* in his life and conduct. Every thought generated in the mind is known to *Paramatma*, and so whatever is thought of by man should be pure and good.

Where is God ? The answer is He is everywhere. This verse states the '*saguna*' aspect of Brahman, the all-pervasive cosmic intelligence, the basis and foundation by which the whole of the manifested universe is sustained.

sarvam avritya tishtati: Brahmam pervades all the Universe. What pervades all should be more than the Universe that is pervaded. The Universe which is *Drisya* is just a fragment of Brahman, who is infinitely greater and higher. So, instead of clinging to *Drisya*, one should take refuge in the *Drik, Paramatma.*

15. सर्वेन्द्रियगुणाभासं सर्वेन्द्रियविवर्जितम् ।
असक्तं सर्वभृच्चैव निर्गुणं गुणभोक्तृ च ॥ १५

16. बहिरन्तश्च भूतानामचरं चरमेव च ।
सूक्ष्मत्वात्तदविज्ञेयं दूरस्थं चान्तिके च तत् ॥ १६

17. अविभक्तं च भूतेषु विभक्तमिव च स्थितम् ।
भूतभर्तृ च तज्ज्ञेयं ग्रसिष्णु प्रभविष्णु च ॥ १७

18. ज्योतिषामपि तज्ज्योतिस्तमसः परमुच्यते ।
ज्ञानं ज्ञेयं ज्ञानगम्यं हृदि सर्वस्य विष्ठितम् ॥ १८

Sarvendriya gunabhasam sarvendriya vivarjitam ।
asaktam sarvabhricchai'va nirgunam gunabhoktri cha ॥ 15

Bahir antas cha bhutanam acharam charam eva cha ।
suksmatvat thad avijneyam durastham cha'ntike cha tat ॥ 16

Avibhaktam cha bhuteshu vibhaktam iva cha sthitam ।
bhuta bhartru cha tajjneyam grasishnu prabhavishnu cha ॥ 17

Jyotisham api taj jyotis tamasah param uchyate ।
jnanam jneyam jnanagamyam hridi sarvasya vishthitam ॥ 18

Meaning : तत् *tat* : Brahman, सर्वेन्द्रिय गुणाभासम् *sarvendriyagunabhasam* : the functions of all the senses, सर्वेन्द्रिय विवर्जितम् *sarvendriya vivarjitam* : devoid of all the senses, असक्तम् *asaktam* : unattached, सर्वभृत् च एव *sarvabhrit cha eva* : and also supporting all, निर्गुणम् *nirgunam* : without qualities,

गुण भोक्तृ च *gunabhoktri cha* : and (yet) experiencer of the qualities, भूतानाम् *bhutanam* : of all elements, बहिः *bahih* : without, अन्तः च *antah cha* : and within (Brahman is), अचरम् *acharam* : non-moving, चरम् एव च *charm eva cha* : and also moving, सूक्ष्मत्वात् *sukshmatvat* : because of its subtlity, अविज्ञेयम् *avijneyam* : (is) unknowable, तत् *tat* : that (Brahman), दूरस्थम् *durastham* : far away, अन्तिके च *anti kecha* : and near, भूतेषु *bhuteshu* : in beings, तत् *tat* : that (Brahman), अविभक्तम् च *avibhaktam cha* : and indivisible, विभक्तम् इव च *vibhaktim iva cha* : and as if divided, स्थितम् *sthitam* : exists, भूतभर्तृ च *bhuta–bhartri cha* : and the supporters of beings, ग्रसिष्णु *grasishnu* : devouring, प्रभविष्णु च *prabhavishnu cha* : and generating, *tat* : that (Brahman), ज्ञेयम् *jneyam* : to be known, तत् *tat* : Brahman, ज्योतिषाम् अपि *jyotisham api* : even of shining objects like sun, fire etc , ज्योतिः *jyotih* : light, तमसः परम् *tamasah param* : beyond darkness, (ignorance), ज्ञानम् *jnanam* : knowledge (intelligence), ज्ञेयम् *jneyam* : the knowledge, ज्ञानगम्यम् *jnanagamyam* : the goal of knowledge, सर्वस्य *sarvasya* : of all beings, हृदि *hridi* : in the heart, विष्ठितम् *vishtitam* : seated, उच्यते *ucchyate*: is said.

Substance : That Brahman shines through the functions of all the senses, and yet is without the senses; it is unattached and yet is supporting all; it is without qualities, and yet it is the experiencer of all qualities.

That Brahman exists within and without all the beings; it is immoving and also moving; because of its subtlity it is unknowable (by the ignorant); it is far away and also near.

That Brahman is undivided and yet exists in beings as if divided; it is the supporter of all beings; it is worthy to be known, it is destroying and also generating.

That Brahman is the light of the shining objects like the Sun, Moon and Fire; it is beyond darkness (ignorance); it is knowledge, the knowable and the goal of knowledge; in the heart of all beings it is seated.

Commentary : In these verses, the Knowable (Brahman) is stated vividly. '*Jnanagamyam*' i. e. the goal to be reached by the practice of the qualities of knowledge mentioned in verses 8-12. The supreme Brahman is known only to those who possess the qualities of knowledge. But the qualities themselves are not the goal. The goal is Brahman. Whatever path is followed, *Karma*, *Bhakti*, *Yoga* or *Dhyana*, the end of the spiritual pilgrimage is Brahman. Brahma-*Jnana* liberates man from the horrible dream of ignorance, birth and death. Man knows the reality and that he is himself one with the Reality. The little 'I' did not and does not exist. So the seeker should contemplate the Knowable (*Jneyam* : Brahman) and realise his identity with That.

The idea is that with the destruction of the *vasanas*, one should possess the Knowledge of the Supreme. '*Sadhana*' and knowledge of '*Sadhya*' are both necessary. The aim of the Gita is to clear the path and also to attain the goal. Man's glorious destiny is the Realisation of Brahman. May all the seekers discard all foolish and impure notions of their being flesh and blood and know themselves to be the blissful and ever-blessed *paramatma*.

asaktam : (drik) *Atma* does not touch the objective world (*drisya prapancham*.)

bahirantas cha bhutanam : He is both inside and outside all beings. So near He is to beings, witnessing all that they think and do, that they should never commit evil and sin in any manner what-so-ever.

acharam charam eva cha : He is moving and unmoving: How can this be ? In the dream-state man imagines that he is moving here and there and doing so many things. But does he really move ? No. He is lying down in his bed. So also, this Universe in the form of beings is moving, and as Brahman it is

unmoving. The real man, being Brahman does not move. What moves is the *Drisya prapancham* (*Prakriti*). Or it may also be interpreted that He is both the objects like animals and birds and so on, and also the unmoving like mountains and trees etc.

sukshmatvat avijneyam : There are three ethers 1) The material ether (*Sthulakasa*) 2) The mental ether (*Chittakasa*) 3) The Intelligene ether (*Chidakasa*). One is subtle than the other. The third is the subtlest of all. This *Chidakasa* is the knowable Brahman. It is unseen by the physical eye, by the mental eye, by the eyes of the ignorant. Only the vision of knowledge reveals the Supreme.

antike cha tat : He is near, very near to the people. Knowing this they should be free from all evil and sin.

vibhaktamiva cha : Brahman is undivided. He does not exist as a separate entity in the beings of the world. It would be absurd to think that each man has a separate Brahman of his own. It is the one Being who is present in all. On account of '*avidya*' it appears as though He is divided. That is why the word '*iva*' is used. In a pot of water, in the river, in the ocean, the Sun's reflection is seeen differently. But the Sun is only one. Exactly in that manner, the one Brahman, who is shining through the millions of beings, appears to be divided, but is not really divided. Like the string keeping together different flowers, He exists all alone sustaining the manifold universe. Brahman being infinite, there cannot be any separateness or division in Him. The aim of spiritual '*sadhana*' is to know that one in this manifold Universe of name and form.

Bhutabhatricha, ***grasishnu prabhavishnu cha*** : He is the supporter, the creator and the destroyer. He is Brahma, Vishnu and Siva.

tamasah param : All these worlds, mind and *buddhi*, are in the realm of '*avidya*'. This ignorance is itself darkness. The Lord is beyond the darkness of '*avidya*' (*aditya varnam tamasah parastat*). (8-9).

jnanam, jneyam, jnanagamyam : The first word (*jnanam*) stands for knowledge. The second word (*Jneyam*) mens *Atman*. The third is '*Jnanagamyam*'—Here the word '*jnanam*' stands for qualities like humility etc. which lead to the understanding of Brahman. *Jneyam* is that which is to be known, the knowable (i. e.) the Supreme Brahman. This alone takes man beyond *samsara*. No other knowledge can achieve this liberation for mankind.

How then to realise God? Certainly, the answer is by the full possession of the qualities of *Jnana*-like *amanitvam*, '*adambhitvam*' etc. There is no other way. Let the seekers be perfectly clear about this point, and strive hard to cultivate every one of the divine virtues.

hridi sarvasya vishtitam : He is in the heart of all. From worms and germs upto Brahma (Creator) the Lord is present in every being, in the moving and the unmoving. There is nothing where he is not. This being the highest truth, each one can realise Him in His own heart. Whether one looks out at the manifested universe or looks within at the *Atma* the same Brahman exists. There cannot be any distinction of high or low or big or small. Every one can hope to realise Him, whoever he is and wherever he may stand in the scheme of things.

Question : *What is the nature of jneyam* (*Parabrahman*) ?

Answer : 1) That Brahman having hands and legs everywhere and every where having heads and faces, and having ears everywhere exists in the Universe, 2) It pervads all the Universe, 3) It shines by the functions of all the senses, 4) It is without the senses, 5) It is unattached, 6) It supports all, 7) It is without the three qualities i. e. *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*, 8) It is the experiencer of the qualities, 9) It exists within and without all beings, 10) It is unmoving, 11) and it is moving, 12) It is unknowable to ignorant because of its subtlity, 13) It is far away, 14) It is near, 15) It is indivisible but exists as if divided in beings, 16) It is the supporter of beings, 17) It is worthy to be known, 18) It is destroying and also generating,

19) That Brahman is the Light of the shining objects like the Sun, the Moon and the Fire, 20) It is beyond darkness (ignorance), 21) It is knowledge, the knowable and the goal of knowledge, 22) It is seated in the heart of all beings.

The Lord, having described kshetra and kshetrajna, now declares the fruit of the knowledge.

19. इति क्षेत्रं तथा ज्ञानं ज्ञेयं चोक्तं समासतः ।
मद्भक्त एतद्विज्ञाय मद्भावायोपपद्यते ॥ १९

Iti kshetram tatha jnanam jneyam cho'ktam samasatah ।
madbhakta etad vijnaya madbhavayo'papadyate ॥ 19

Meaning : इति *iti* : thus, क्षेत्रम् *kshetram* : the field, तथा *tatha* : as well as, ज्ञानम् *jnanam* : knowledge, ज्ञेयम् च *jneyam cha* : and the knowable, समासतः *samasatah* : briefly, उक्तम् *uktam* : is said, मद्भक्तः *madbhaktah* : My devotee, एतत् *etat* : this, विज्ञाय *vijnaya* : knowing, मद्भावाय *madbhavaya* : to My being (Moksha), उपपद्यते *upapadyate* : is fit.

Substance : Thus, the Field as well as Knowledge and that which is to be known (the knowable) is said briefly; My devotee, knowing this becomes fit to enter My being (*Moksha*).

Commentary : *Madbhakta etad vijnaya* : It is clear from this that no one, unless he is the devotee of Lord, can attain that knowledge which makes him fit to become one with the Supreme Being, It is only from the flower of devotion that the fruit of knowledge grows. Therefore every seeker has to acquire God's grace and *Guru's* benediction by virtuous acts, by worship, by *japa*, *tapas*, by singing the name and glory of the Lord and by following all the aids to pure devotion. Then, out of compassion, He bestows on His *Bhakta* the '*buddhiyoga*' which enables him to distinguish the *kshetra* and *kshetrajna*. This knowledge leads him to become one with *Paramatma* (*Madbhavaya*). One may become a great scholar of the *Sastras* and Sciences, but he cannot obtain knowledge of the Divine if there is no devotion.

Learning and realisation are entirely different. They are poles apart. Let the seekers move forward on the path of devotion, and let them gradually gain the intellectual purity to understand the final Truth.

Moksha is the fruit of perfect knowledge of the *kshetra* and *kshetrajna*. And this knowledge is offered to the true devotee by the Lord Himself.

Question : *Who attains union with God, Moksha ?*

Answer : He who knows the 'Kshetra' and 'Kshetrajna'.

Question : *Who can obtain this knowledge ?*

Answer : Only the true devotee of the Lord.

The Lord explains Prakriti and Purusha.

20. प्रकृतिं पुरुषं चैव विद्ध्यनादी उभावपि ।
विकारांश्च गुणांश्चैव विद्धि प्रकृतिसंभवान् ॥ २०

Prakritim purusham chai'va viddhyanadi ubhavapi ।
vikaramscha gunamschai'va viddhi prakritisambhavan ॥ 20

Meaning : प्रकृतिं *prakritim :* prakriti (matter), पुरुषम् च एव *purusham cha eva :* and also purusha (Spirit), उभौ अपि *ubhau api :* even both, अनादी *anadi :* beginningless, विद्धि *viddhi :* know, विकारांश्च *vikaramscha :* and modifications, गुणान् च एव *gunam cha eva :* and also qualities, प्रकृतिसंभवान् *prakriti sambhavam :* born of prakriti, विद्धि *viddhi :* know.

Substance : (O Arjuna !) Know that *Prakriti* and *Purusha* are both beginningless; know also that modifications and qualities (*sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*) are born of *Prakriti*.

Commentary : Many ask the question–"When did this *samsara*, bondage, *maya*, begin ?"–It would be difficult for the sleeper to say when a dream has started during sleep. This world also is of the same nature. It is beginningless. If one enters a mountain-cave full of darkness, he cannot say how long the darkness has been there. Therefore it is said that this

Maya, *Prakriti*, is beginningless (*anadi*). No one can say when it began. But it has not been said that it is endless (*anantam*). If it is endless also, no one can cross over. *Maya* has no beginning, but it has an end. The moment knowledge dawns on man, it ends. The illusion is shattered, the moment Truth is seen. The dream-world may be beginningless, but the moment one wakes up it is all gone. True Knowledge then removes delusion for ever. So *Prakriti* has no beginning but has an end; *Purusha* is beginningless and endless. He is eternal.

Prakriti sambhavan : *Purusha* is ever pure (*Nityasuddha*). There cannot be any change or modification in Him. Desire, hatred, pleasure and pain all these arise from *Prakriti*. As long as these passions agitate the mind, it is clear to every one that he is subject to the power of *Maya*, that he is still in the realm of *kshetra* and has not attained the *kshetrajna*. These '*vasanas*,' having come to man from endless births, should be cleared by determined effort, and he should reach the *Purusha* in due course. Whenever the mind is agitated by these passions, whenever the intellect becomes clouded, one should firmly assert and affirm that he is the *Purusha*, changeless, pure and perfect. He should keep himself alert and apart, and watch these modifications as objective changes in the outside world with which he is not at all concerned. He should remain firm and immovable like the mountain. That is the way to overcome the past '*samkaras*'; there is no other way.

The theme of Prakriti and Purusha is further elaborated :

21 कार्यकारणकर्तृत्वे हेतुः प्रकृतिरुच्यते ।
पुरुषः सुखदुःखानां भोक्तृत्वे हेतुरुच्यते ॥ २१

Karya karana kartritve hetuh prakritir uchyate ।
purushah sukhaduhkhanam bhoktritve hetur uchyate ॥ 21

Meaning : कार्यकारण कर्तृत्वे *karyakarana kartritve :* in producing the effect and the cause, प्रकृतिः *prakriti :* (Maya) Prakriti, हेतुः *hetuh :* cause, उच्यते *uchyate :* is said, सुखदुःखानाम् *sukhaduhkhanam :* of joy and sorrow, भोक्तृत्वे *bhoktritve :* in

Maya, *Prakriti*, is beginningless (*anadi*). No one can say when it began. But it has not been said that it is endless (*anantam*). If it is endless also, no one can cross over. *Maya* has no beginning, but it has an end. The moment knowledge dawns on man, it ends. The illusion is shattered, the moment Truth is seen. The dream-world may be beginningless, but the moment one wakes up it is all gone. True Knowledge then removes delusion for ever. So *Prakriti* has no beginning but has an end; *Purusha* is beginningless and endless. He is eternal.

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Karya karana kartritve hetuh prakritir uchyate ।
purushah sukhaduhkhanam bhoktritve hetur uchyate ॥ 21

Meaning: कार्यकारण कर्तृत्वे *karyakarana kartritve*: in producing the effect and the cause, प्रकृतिः *prakriti*: (Maya) Prakriti, हेतुः *hetuh*: cause, उच्यते *uchyate*: is said, सुखदुःखानाम् *sukhaduhkhanam*: of joy and sorrow, भोक्तृत्वे *bhoktritve*: in

the experience, पुरुषः *purushah*: purusha, हेतुः *hetuh*: cause, उच्यते *uchyate*: is said.

Substance: *Prakriti* is said to be the cause in providing the chain of cause and effect; *Purusha* is said to be the cause in the experience of joy and sorrow.

Commentary: '*Karyam*' means the body; '*Karanam*' means the senses, mind and ego, the five elements, and the objects of the sense-world. *Prakriti* is the cause, (i. e.) all these things are produced by *Prakriti*. So *Prakriti* is the cause of these things. (*Prakriti* is inert (*Jada*) and so cannot have the power of experiencing joy and sorrow. *Purusha* is pure consciousness. So He cannot be subject to joy and sorrow. But by the senses of *Prakriti*, the *Purusha* appears to be experiencing these modifications of joy and sorrow. Really *Purusha* does not cause anything nor does anything affect Him in any way. He is neither cause nor effect, neither the modifications nor the experiencer of them.

Intermingling with Prakriti is the cause of birth.

22. पुरुषः प्रकृतिस्थो हि भुङ्क्ते प्रकृतिजान्गुणान्।
कारणं गुणसङ्गोऽस्य सदसद्योनिजन्मसु॥ २२

Purushah prakritistho hi bhunkte prakritijan gunan ।
karanam gunasangno'sya sad asad yoni janmasu ॥ 22

Meaning: प्रकृतिस्थः *prakritisthah*: seated in prakriti, पुरुषः *purushah*: purusha (jiva) प्रकृतिजान् *prakriti jan*: born of Maya, गुणान् *gunan*: qualities (like joy and sorrow), भुङ्क्ते हि *bhunktehi*: verily enjoys, गुणसङ्गः *gunasangah*: attachment to the Gunas, अस्य *asya*: to the jiva, सदसद्योनि जन्मसु *sadasadyoni janmasu*: of birth in good and evil wombs, कारणम् *karanam*: (is) the cause.

Substance: Seated in *Prakriti*, *Purusha* (*Jiva*) enjoys the qualities born of *Prakriti*; attachment to the qualities is the cause for the birth of the *Jiva* in good and evil wombs.

The Lord declares that the Jiva is Purusha.

23\. उपद्रष्टानुमन्ता च भर्ता भोक्ता महेश्वरः ।
परमात्मेति चाप्युक्तो देहेऽस्मिन्पुरुषः परः ॥ २३

Upadrasta'numanta cha bharta bhokta mahesvarah ।
paramatme'ti cha'pyukto dehe'smin purushah parah ॥ 23

Meaning : पुरुषः *Purushah :* Atma, अस्मिन् देहे अपि *asmin dehe api* (*sati*) : even though dwelling in this body, परः *parah :* separate from the body, उपद्रष्टा *upadrashta :* witness (sakshi), अनुमन्ता च *anumanta cha:* and the permitter, भर्ता *bharta :* the supporter, भोक्ता *bhokta :* the enjoyer, महेश्वरः *mahesvarah :* the great Lord, परमात्मा इति च *paramatma iti cha :* and thus the supreme Self, उक्तः *uktah :* is called.

Substance : Though the *Purusha* (*Atma*) dwells in this body, yet he is separate from the body; the witness, the permitter, the supporter, and the enjoyer. The great Lord, *Paramatma* thus He is called.

Commentary : *Upadrashta :* In *yajna*, the '*upadrashta*' remains a spectator. So also, *Atma*, though dwelling in the body, is separate from the body. He is the spectator of the body, mind and their modifications. Therefore the '*jiva*' should meditate continuously that he is not at all the body and mind but *Atma*. By the very force of that meditation, he regains his original state as *Atma*. In truth, the *jiva* is no other than *Atma*. He is deluded into thinking that he is the body which he never was and which he never can be. This deluded thinking should be given up once for all, and man should assert himself to be *Atma* which he really is.

Mahesvarah, Paramatma, asmin dehe : The great Lord, *Paramatma* is in this body, nearest to us. So, it should be easy to look up and know that the real man is that *Paramatma*. The great Lord is not far away but seated in our very heart. He is

the controller and the punisher. Purity and truth in thought, word and deed should be followed always as everything takes place under the very eye of the Lord.

Parah : This word may be taken to mean the supreme (*Purusha*). He is distinct from the body and mind and transcends all these vehicles (*Kosas*).

Question : *What is the nature of Paramatma ?*

Answer : Though dwelling in the body, He is distinct from the body. He is the witness. He is the permitter, the supporter, the enjoyer, the Great Lord, the Controller.

The fruit of this knowledge of Prakriti and Purusha is stated here.

24\. य एवं वेत्ति पुरुषं प्रकृतिं च गुणैः सह ।
सर्वथा वर्तमानोऽपि न स भूयोऽभिजायते ॥ २४

Ya evam vetti purusham prakritim cha gunaih saha ।
sarvatha vartamano'pi na sa bhuyo'bhijayate ॥ 24

Meaning : यः *yah :* who, एवम् *evam :* thus, पुरुषम् *purusham :* Purusha, गुणैः सह *gunaih sah :* with the three Gunas, प्रकृतिम् च *prakritim cha :* and prakriti, वेत्ति *vetti :* knows, सः *sah :* he, सर्वथा वर्तमानः अपि *sarvathavaratamanah api :* though in what-so-ever way acting, भूयः *bhuyah :* again, न अभिजायते *na abhijayate :* is not born.

Substance : Who, in this way knows *Purusha* (*Atma*) and *Prakriti* with *Gunas*, he in what-so-ever way acting is not born again.

Commentary : The man of descrimination is able to see distinctly what *Prakriti* is and who *Purusha* is. Such a man knows that he is the *Drik* (seer) and *Prakriti Drisya* (seen). He also knows the qualities of *Prakriti–sattva, rajas* and *tamas*. He takes refuge, not in *Prakriti*, which causes bondage, birth and all the ills of life, but in *Atma*, the *Purusha*, free and perfect, the blissful and the blessed. Detached from *Prakriti*,

he attaches himself to *purusha*. He is not born again. He is liberated. He is *Jivanmukta*.

sarvadha vartamanopi : The wise man who has released himself from the bondage of *prakriti*, may act in whatever way he wishes. He may be *Sannyasi*, absorbed in '*samadhi*' always. Or he may be an active worker in the world doing many good works for the benefit of humanity. He may be a celebite or a house-holder. He has no birth again. We should understand that the word '*sarvatha*' does not imply sinful deeds, prohibited by the *sastras*. In fact, the Lord has always stated the qualities of knowledge, without which this supreme understanding cannot be obtained by anyone. Having obtained the knowledge of the *purusha* the *Jivanmukta* can work in whatever way he likes for universal good or he may remain in absolute *samadhi*. This makes no difference for Him. He is ever free.

Question : *What is the reward of knowing distinctly prakriti and purusha* ?

Answer : He is not born again, though he may live in whatever way he wishes.

In two verses the Lord explains that many attain liberation in various ways according to their samskaras. (*tendencies*).

25. ध्यानेनात्मनि पश्यन्ति केचिदात्मानमात्मना ।
अन्ये सांख्येन योगेन कर्मयोगेन चापरे ॥ २५

Dhyanena'tmani pasyanti kechid atmanam atmana ।
anye samkhyena yogena karmayogena cha'pare ॥ 25

Meaning : आत्मानम् *atmanam* : Atma (pratyak or paramatma), केचित् *kechit* : some, आत्मना *atmana* : with purified mind, ध्यानेन *dhyanena*: by Dhyana yoga, आत्मनि *atmani* : in themselves, पश्यन्ति *pasyanti* : see (realise), अन्ये *anye* : some others, सांख्येन योगेन *samkhyena yogena* : by Samkhya yoga, अपरे *apare* : some others, कर्मयोगेन च *karma yogena cha* : and by Karma yoga, (**pasyanti**), realise paramatma).

Substance : Some behold *Atma* (*pratyagatma* or *paramatma*) in themselves with purified mind by *dhyana yoga*; others (behold *Atma*) by *samkhya yoga*; yet others (behold *Atma*) by *Karma yoga*.

Commentary : Men are born with different mental predis-positions according to their past *samskaras*. They strive to know the truth in different ways, suitable to their nature. Some meditate, some follow *bhakti*, some *jnana*, some the path of work. Whatever may be the path, if the mind is pure and effort sincere, they realise God. As all these paths lead to the same goal, they are all of epual merit. Each man is free to follow any path that he chooses. All reach the same goal.

Bhakti yoga is not mentioned here separately because devotion to God is essential for success in any path. *Bhakti* is necessary for all aspirants whatever the path they follow. So particular mention of it is not made here. Without such devotion no aspirant succeeds in any path (Vide Verse 19).

Pasyanti : *Paramatma* is seen by man (i. e.) realised by the aspirant as a deep abiding illuminating experience. It is not mere speculation or argument or mere logical conclusion. The Lord here declares that God can be seen, and all doubts are set at rest by this tremendous declaration – "You can see God; great souls have beheld by *Dhyana* and other means"—So says Lord Krishna.

atmani : *Paramatma* is seen in one's own self. As He is seated in the heart, the seeker has to gradually cultivate the attitude of looking for His presence within himself rather than searching for Him in other places. He has to search and examine himself to unveil God in his own heart. Moreover, whatever may be the path followed, the purified mind alone is the instrument for Self-realisation. It is the key to open the gateway to liberation (*Moksha*). It is in one's own hands. What is necessary is to cleanse the mind of the accumulated dust of past *samskaras*, reshape in such a way as to make it capable of perceiving the Self.

It is wrong to think that one *yoga* is superior to another. Some think that *Jnana yoga* is higher than *Karma yoga*. The Lord has set at rest all these foolish notions by exphasising the importance of every type of *yoga* according the natural tendencies of the seeker. *Karmayoga* is necessary to purify the heart and through such purity man attains Self realisation, which is the fruit of *Jnana*.

Question: *Where is Paramatma to be realised ?*

Answer : In ones own heart.

Question: *With what ?*

Answer : With the purified mind.

Question: *How ?*

Answer : Some by Dhyana yoga, others by 'Sankhya yoga, and yet others by Karma yoga realise 'Paramatma.'

26. अन्ये त्वेवमजानन्तः श्रुत्वान्येभ्य उपासते ।
तेऽपि चातितरन्त्येव मृत्युं श्रुतिपरायणाः ॥ २६

anye tv evam ajanantah srutva'nyebhya upasate ।
te'pi cha'titaranty eva mrtyum srutiparayanah । 26

Meaning: अन्ये तु *any tu :* others yet, एवम् *evam :* in this way (by Dhyana, Samkhya and Karmayogas), अजानन्तः *ajanantah :* not knowing (God), अन्येभ्यः *anyebhyah :* from others, श्रुत्वा *srutwa :* hearing of Paramatma (initiated by othets), उपासते *upasate :* worship, श्रुति परायणाः *sruti parayanah :* regarding what they have heard on the Supreme refuge, ते अपि च *te api cha :* and they also, मृत्युम् *mrityum :* Samsara in the form of death, अतितरन्ति एव *atitaranti eva :* verily cross over.

Substance: Yet others, nor knowing (*Paramatma* by the *Dhyana*, *Samkhya* and *Karma yogas*), hearing from others, worship; Even they, regarding what they have heard as the Supreme refuge, cross over death (*Samsara*).

Commentary : It is declared that those people who are not able to practise the above-mentioned *yogas* cross over *samsara* by listening to experienced elders and worshipping according to their instructions.

ajanantah : Though these people do not have knowledge of *yoga*, study, and enlightenment, yet by the very power of their faith and devotion to the teaching of elders, they cross over the ocean of death. One may not be an expert in medical science, and yet by taking medicine prescribed by the doctor with faith and conviction, the disease is cured ! Even the doctor has to take medicine to cure himself of any disease. His knowledge of medicine does not cure him. Therefore the word'*upasate*' is used emphatically here.Mere scholarship or mere hearing is not enough. Actual worship is essential. No doubt, it is good to have knowledge and understanding of the *Sastras*. What is implied here is that, if a person does not possess this form of equipment, he need not be disheartened. He can hear of God, the ways of God, the path to reach Him, from experienced elders and act accordingly. That is enough to take him over *samsara*, if he has faith in their words and worship with devotion and conviction. He verily crosses over death. There is no doubt about it.

mrityum : Death is used here as a synonym for the bondage of *samsara*. All the so called attractions of life are transient and end in death. So the wise man should not have any attachment for them. What he should aspire for is immortality by self-realisation.

Question: *What is the way for the unlearned to cross-over death ?*

Answer : They should hear of the Truth from others, and practising it they are saved from death.

Question: *What is the nature of Samsara ?*

Answer : It is transient and ends in death.

Question: *How can man cross over death* ?

Answer : By hearing of truth from experienced elders and practising it.

All objects are produced by the union of kshetra and kshetrajna.

27. यावत्संजायते किञ्चित्सत्त्वं स्थावरजङ्गमम् ।
क्षेत्रक्षेत्रज्ञसंयोगात्तद्विद्धि भरतर्षभ ॥ २७

Yavat samjayate kimchit sattvam sthavara jangamam ।
kshetrakshetrajna samyogat tad viddhi bharatarshabha ॥ 27

Meaning : भरतर्षभ *bharatarshabha* : O Arjuna, best of the Bharatas, स्थावर जङ्गमम् *sthavara jangamam* : the unmoving and the moving, सत्त्वम् *sattvam* : being, यावत् किञ्चित् *yavat kimchit* : whatsoever any, संजायते *sanjayate:* is born, तत् *tat* : that, क्षेत्रक्षेत्रज्ञ संयोगात् *kshetra kshetrajna samyogat* : from the union of the kshetra and kshetrajna, विद्धि *viddhi* : know (to be produced).

Substance : O Arjuna! in this world whatever being moving or unmoving, is born, know that to be produced from the union of *kshetra* and *kshetrajna*.

Commentary : The presence of the Lord in every thing in the world is declared here. The moving and non-moving objects, whatever they are, all of them and everyone of them, are produced by the union of *prakriti* and *purusha* (*kshetra* and *kshetrajna*). Knowing this man has to cultivate universal love as the rule of conduct in life. Does God exist in the stone? The answer is that the stone cannot have any existence at all, without the union with the Lord. The stone as stone would not be there. This being so, is it any wonder that the Lord is present in living beings, animals, birds or men? So in the trees and mountains, rivers and valleys, fields and meadows, in the ant, in the sparrow, in the deer and the tiger, in men, in demous and the Gods, *paramatma* exists. Such faith is needed for God-realisation.

Question: *How are the moving and non-moving objects produced?*

Answer : They are produced by the union of 'kshetra' and 'kshetrajna'.

He is the real seer who sees the all-pervading ***Paramatma.***

28. समं सर्वेषु भूतेषु तिष्ठन्तं परमेश्वरम् ।
विनश्यत्स्वविनश्यन्तं यः पश्यति स पश्यति ॥ २८

Samam sarveshu bhuteshu tishantam paramesvaram ।
vinasyatsvavinasyantam yah pasyati sa pasyati ॥ 28

Meaning : सर्वेषु भूतेषु *sarveshu bhuteshu* : in all beings, समम् *samam* : equally, तिष्ठन्तं *tisthantam* : existing, परमेश्वरम् the supreme Lord, विनश्यत्सु *vinasyatsu* : though the body, vital breath etc. die, अविनश्यन्तम् *avinasyantam* : undying यः *yah* : who, पश्यति *pasyati* : sees, सः *sah* : he, पश्यति *pasyati* : sees (knows the truth).

Substance : Who sees the supreme Lord equally in all beings, who sees that He is undying, though the body and vital forces perish, he is the real seer (He knows the Truth).

Commentary : *Paramatma* is present in all beings equally. It is not that He is more present in some and less present in others. He is like the string inside a garland of flowers.

The supreme Lord is present in all equally.

avinasyantam : The vehicles of the body, *Prana*, mind etc., perish at the time of death. But *Atma*, the Lord is undestructible. He exists. It is clear that the whole of the objective world perishes and the *Drik*, *Atma*, the Lord alone is eternal. Therefore to let go the bond of attachment to the perishable things, and to strengthen firm hold of the Lord, is the duty of all thoughtful men.

yah pasyati sa pasyati : The physical eyes are formed to see material things only. They cannot see any thing more. But the vision of the seer goes deeper and discovers the eternal

principle of life, the Supreme Lord, in the midst of the destruction of phenomenal nature. It is the eye of Knowledge that sees *Atma*, the Lord. He alone sees, because he sees the truth. All others, though having eyes, do not see the truth whatever their power and position, wealth and beauty may be. So, the aspirants should open the inner eye of knowledge, see the truth, and become fearless of death. They would realise that what is perishing is only the body, and the Lord, *Atma* is Eternal, pure and perfect. This knowledge alone saves man from the terrors of death.

Question : *Where is Paramatma* ?

Answer : In all beings.

Question : *How* ?

Answer : Equally in all beings.

Question : *What is the nature of the body etc.* ?

Answer : The body, Prana and mind are subject to death.

Question : *What is the nature of Atma* ?

Answer : It is Immortal; Though the body and other vehicles die, it exists.

Question : *Who is the real seer* ?

Answer : Who knows that Atma exists, in the midst of the perishing phenominal world, he is the real seer, because he has opened the eye of Knowledge.

He who knows that the Lord exists equally in all, attains liberation (Moksha).

29. समं पश्यन्हि सर्वत्र समवस्थितमीश्वरम् ।
न हिनस्त्यात्मनात्मानं ततो याति परां गतिम् ॥ २९

Samam pasyan hi sarvatra samavasthitam isvaram ।
na hinastyatmana'tmanam tato yati param gatim । 29

Meaning : हि *hi* : for, सर्वत्र *sarvatra* : in all beings, समवस्थितम् *samavasthitam* : equally dwelling, ईश्वरम् *isvaram* : the Lord (Paramatma), समम् *samam* : equally, पश्यन् *pasyan* : seeing (realising), आत्मना *atmana* : by self, आत्मानम् *atmanam* : the Self, न हिनस्ति *na hinasti* : destorys not, ततः *tatah* : so, पराम्गतिम् *paramgatim* : supreme goal (Moksha), याति *yati* : attains.

Substance : Seeing the Lord equally dwelling, the same in all beings, he does not destroy the Self by the self; so, he attains the supreme goal (*Moksha*).

Commentary : *Samam, sarvatra, samavasthitam* : These three words show that the Lord is (1) equally present, (2) is in all beings. (3) and is the same. The wise man who realises *Atma* in this way does not destroy the Self with the self. What is meant is that the ignorant man destroys the Self by identifying himself with the body. In fact this amounts to suicide (*Atma hatya*). The Lord shows how the ignorant man, thinking of himself as the non–Self, is destroying his true Self. Generally what does the common man see and think ? He sees the body and the world externally, and thinks that he is the body. What happens then ? The true Self is as good as having been destroyed, because its existence is not known or realised. The wise man sees and realises the true Self, and so he does not care for the death of the body and the other vehicles covering the *Atma*. He knows that he is the immortal Self. But the ignorant not knowing this go through the wheel of suffering and death endlessly. They take birth after birth and die again and again. The brief interval of life is a horrible dream of sorrow and misery. This is the so–called life that man clings to desperately.

Therefore the seeker should be constantly in contact with the Self. *Paramatma*, who exists equally in all beings. This Self is universal and exists everywhere, also in one's own heart. This Knowledge and realisation leads the aspirant to the highest goal (*Moksha*). There is no state higher than freedom and perfection for any man anywhere.

Question : *How does the Lord pervade the universe* ?

Answer : Equally.

Question: *What is the cause of Samsara ?*

Answer : Ignorance of the universal existence of the Lord.

Question: *Who is responsible for this ?*

Answer : Each man is himself the cause of his own birth and death. He identifies himself with the body and destroys his true Self. He commits 'Atma-hatya'.

Question: *What is the way out of Samsara ?*

Answer : Knowing and realising Atma, the Lord, present equally everywhere is the way to liberation.

Question: *What is the highest state of man ?*

Answer : Self-realisation, Moksha.

Question : *What is the way to Self-realisation ?*

Answer : Knowing the universal presence of the Lord, and realising Him in one's own heart, is the way to Self-realisation.

All actions are performed by Prakriti; Atma is non-doer.

30. प्रकृत्यैव च कर्माणि क्रियमाणानि सर्वशः ।
यः पश्यति तथात्मानमकर्तारं स पश्यति ॥ ३०

Prakrtyai'va cha karmani kriyamanani sarvasah ।
yah pasyati tatha'tmanam akartaram sa pasyati ॥ 30

Meaning : यः *yah:* he, कर्माणि *karmani :* actions, प्रकृत्या एव *prakritya eva :* by prakriti only, सर्वशः *sarvasah :* in all ways, क्रियमाणानि *kriyamanani :* are performed, तथा *tatha :* thus, आत्मानम् *atmanam :* the Self, अकर्तारं च *akartaramcha :* and actionless, non-doer, पश्यति *pasyati :* sees, knows, सः *sah :* he, पश्यति *pasyati :* sees, knows.

Substance : Who sees that all actions in all ways are being performed by *Prakriti* only, and thus also sees that *Atma* is non-doer, he sees (realises the Truth).

Commentary : All actions in the world in every way are being performed by *Prakriti*. The real Self of man is actionless, non-doer, and only the witness of these changes and modifications that take place before Him. By His presnce, *Prakriti* is empowered to act in various ways, to carry out its work according to natural laws. The man who knows the secret is really the wise man. His vision is true. The others having eyes do not see. Most people attribute action to themselves and are bound by the wheel of *Karma*. They say–'I have bad work or this good work; I am happy or I am sorrowful; I am dull or I am intelligent and so on.' This is '*Ahamkara*'—a false identification of the Self with body and mind (Vide 3-27). This ruinous identification should go. Unless the truth is clearly seen and realised, man lives in the realm of ignorance (*avidya*) and cannot go beyond *samsara*. The distinct separateness between the actionless *Atma* and the functions of *Prakriti* should be realised by every spiritual aspirant.

Question : *By what are the actions performed in the world ?*

Answer : By Prakriti.

Question: *What is the state of Atma ?*

Answer : It is actionless, non-doer (Akarta). By its presence all the vehicles of the body and mind etc. carry on their functions.

Question : *Who is the true seer in the world ?*

Answer : He who knows that Prakriti performs all actions and that he (Self) is non-doer, is the real seer. The others though having eyes do not possess the eye of knowledge.

When the Jiva attains Brahman is declared.

31. यदा भूतपृथग्भावमेकस्थमनुपश्यति ।
तत एव च विस्तारं ब्रह्म संपद्यते तदा ॥ ३१

Yada bhutaprthagbhavam ekastham anupasyati ।
tata eva cha vistaram brahma sampadyate tada ॥ 31

Meaning: यदा *yada :* when, भूत पृथक्भावं *bhutaprithag-bhavam :* the idea of beings being different and separate (the

manifold universe), एकस्थम् *ekastham* : resting in the one, च *cha* : and, ततः एव *tatah eva* : from that only, विस्तारं *vistaram* : expanding or projecting, अनुपश्यति *anupasyati* : sees well, तदा *tada* : then, (सः *sah*: he), ब्रह्म *brahma* : Brahman, संपद्यते *sampadyate* : attains (becomes Brahman).

Substance : When man sees the manifold world placed in *Paramatma* and projecting from Him only, then he attains Brahman (becomes Brahman).

Commentary : The manifold universe with all the crores of beings, in it, combining, separating, changing, evolving and so on, is in reality the one Supreme Brahman. In that one, these things exist with apparent distinction of name and form. What about the waves on the bosom of the ocean? Does they exist separately from the ocean? No. It is the ocean itself, but by name and form they are projected out of the ocean. No one can look upon the wave as having a separate existence apart from the ocean. There may be millions of waves and yet in reality they are ocean, they may come out of the ocean and disappear in the ocean. The ocean exists, the waves come and go. So also, in *Paramatma* the whole universe appears to exist. It comes out of *Paramatma* and merges in *Paramatma*. He is the Reality. He who understands this mystery attains *Brahma Jnana* and then becomes Brahman.

Anupasyati : The aspirant should see the Truth clearly and firmly. He should cultivate the vision of oneness in all, till it becomes habitual to him. Thus he attains the state of Brahman. It is not enough to know it as a theory. It should be practised and realised. Then whatever he sees, he discovers it as Brahman in all places and under all circumstances.

Brahma sanpadyate tada : The auspicious moment of self-realisation is declared here. There is no prescribed time-limit for it. When he sees that the manifold universe is created in *Paramatma* and is evolving in Him, when he sees the all-

pervading one, minus the name and form—that very moment he attains *Brahmajnana* and becomes Brahman. (The *Jiva* is dissolved in Brahmam and survives as the residual Reality, Brahman).

From this it follows that seeing the manifold is bondage and ignorance; seeing the One is liberation and knowledge. Therefore the aspirant should trancend name and form which is the cause of manifoldness and establish himself in the vision of the one Absolute '*sat chit ananda*'.

Question : *When does man attain Brahman?*

Answer : When he knows and sess that the whole manifold universe is placed in Paramatma and is projected from Him, he realises Brahman. That is Brahma Jnana and Moksha.

In three verses, the nature and excellence of Atma is declared.

32. अनादित्वान्निर्गुणत्वात्परमात्मायमव्ययः ।
शरीरस्थोऽपि कौन्तेय न करोति न लिप्यते ॥ ३२

Anaditvan nirgunatvat paramatma'yam avyayah ।
sarirastho'pi kaunteya na karoti na lipyate ॥ 32

Meaning : कौन्तेय *kaunteya* : O Arjuna! अनादित्वात् *anaditvat* : being without beginning (causeless), निर्गुणत्वात् *nirgunatvat* : being devoid of qualities (Trigunarahita), अव्ययः *avyayah* : imperishable, अयम् *ayam* : this, परमात्मा *paramatma* : Supreme Self, शरीरस्थः अपि *sarirasthah api* : though dwelling in the body, न करोति *na karoti* : does not act, न लिप्यते *na lipyate*: is not tainted.

Substance : O Arjuna! Being without beginning (causeless), being devoid of the three Gunas this *Paramatma*, the Imperishable, though dwelling in the body, does not act and is not tainted.

Commentary : *Paramatma* has no beginning and no end. He is not caused by anything. So He is beyond cause. All other things have a cause. They begin and they come to an end. More over, He is devoid of the three qualities, and consequent changes and modifications. He is Imperishable. He is actionless. He does not do anything. As He is the Infinite, how can He go or come or do this or that ? He is not tainted by anything. How can the awakened man have any contact with the objects of the dream-world ? So, though the body, mind and *buddhi* are doing many things, yet *Atma* stands apart steeped in His own bliss, as the actionless witness of the phenominal world.

Sarirasthah api : The Lord is in the body, in everybody. He is in the secret cave of the human heart. He, this Lord of Lords, is so near us that we should seek for Him, find Him, and share His bliss and blessedness. The human body is the temple; *Atma*, the Lord is the *Deity*; knowing this one should fill himself with purity and light to know and see the Lord and be one with Him.

33. यथा सर्वगतं सौक्ष्म्यादाकाशं नोपलिप्यते।
सर्वत्रावस्थितो देहे तथात्मा नोपलिप्यते ॥ ३३

Yatha sarvagatam saukshmyad akasam no'palipyate ।
sarvatra'vasthito dehe tatha'tma no'palipyate ॥ 33

Meaning : सर्वगतम् *sarvagatam :* the all – pervading, आकाशम् *akasam :* ether, सौक्ष्म्यात् *saukshmyat :* because of its subtlety, यथा *yatha :* as, नोपलिप्यते *nopalipyate :* is not tainted (by dust etc)., तथा *tatha :* so, सर्वत्र देहे *sarvatra dehe :* everywhere in the body (or in all bodies), अवस्थितः *avasthitah :* seated, pervading, आत्मा *atma :* Paramatma, न उपलिप्यते *na upalipyate :* is not tainted (by the impurities of the body etc).

Substance : As the all-pervading ether, because of its subtlety, is not tained (by dust etc.); so also *paramatma*, pervading the body everywhere (or pervading all bodies) is not tainted (by the qualities of the body etc.).

Commentary : Ether is the subtlest of things in the material universe. So it is taken as an illustration to point the all-pervasive, taintless, subtle nature of *Atma*. By simple comparisons to explain high philosophic truths, is the distinct feature of the Gita. It should not be misunderstood that *Atma* is ether. No. Like ether, it is subtle; that is what is meant by the comparison. Ether pervades the sky, the dust, the mire and so on, and yet it is not tainted because it is subtle. Similarly *Atma* pervades the whole body, and yet it is not tainted or affected by the birth and death of the body nor by the pleasures and pains of the mind or by anything taking place through the different vehicles (*upadhis*). More over, though storm-clouds burst into a thunder, lightning and rain, and spread out in different colours yet the sky is not tainted by the cold winds and hail storm. So also, *Atma* is seated firm and unmovable in the body and whatever changes take place in the body and mind, it is not at all touched by them in any way whatsoever. The aspirant has to maintain with faith and courage, the attitude that he is the Self and not the body, that he has nothing to do with the innumarable troubles, sorrows, pleasures and pains of the body and the mind. This practice should be continued till it is finally and immovably fixed in the mind. Then the life of the aspirant would be fearless, sublime and blissful.

Sarvatravasthito dehe : *Paramatma* (as declared in the previous verse) is so near us in our own body, that we should realise Him in our own heart by means of purity in thought, word and deed. It is clear that no distinction is made here about race, religion, sex, age, and nationality. The Supreme Truth is present in all, and will be revealed to all, if the perfect practice is undertaken. The practice is to search for the Lord within oneself by discarding the five sheaths (*Pancha Kosas*) with which He is covered, as pure water in a lake is covered up by moss. There is no doubt that determined seekers would find Him erelong.

Question : *What is the nature of Paramatma* ?

Answer : Though he is seated in the body, yet He is untainted by the changes and modifications in the same way as ether is not tained by dust or mire or clouds etc.

34. यथा प्रकाशयत्येकः कृत्स्नं लोकमिमं रविः ।
क्षेत्रं क्षेत्री तथा कृत्स्नं प्रकाशयति भारत ॥ ३४

Yatha prakasayatyekah kritsnam lokam imam ravih ।
kshetram kshetri tatha kritsnam prakasayati bharata । 34

Meaning : भारत *bharata* : O Arjuna ! एकः *ekah* : One, रविः *ravih* : Sun, इमम् कृत्स्नं *imam kristnam* : all this, लोकम् *lokam* : world, यथा *yatha* : as, प्रकाशयति *prakasyati:* illumines, तथा *tatha* : so also, क्षेत्री *kshetri* : kshetrajna (Paramatma), कृत्स्नं *kristnam* : whole, क्षेत्रम् *kshetram* : the Field, प्रकाशयति *prakasyati* : illumines.

Substance : O Arjuna ! Just as the One Sun illumines this whole world, so the *kshetrajna* (the Lord of the Field) illumines the entire Field (*kshetram*).

Commentary : The all-pervasive character of *paramatma* is stated previously by the illustration of ether. Now the luminosity of *Atma* is declared by the illustration of the sun. Just as the sun, who is the spectator of the world, illumines the whole world by his light, so also *paramatma* illumines the entire *kshetram*-body, mind and intellect. The Sun is only one. *Paramatma* is One. The sun gives light. *Paramatma* is light. The Sun has nothing to do with good and bad nature of men and their actions in the world. *Paramatma* similarly is not concerned with the functions of the body, mind and intellect. He is just the witness, like the Sun. If the sun is not there, the whole world becomes lifeless and dark. So also if *Paramatma* is not there, the universe would crumble to pieces and disappear in darkness and death.

Kritsnam : It implies that *Paramatma* illumines the three states of man (wakefulness, dream and sleep), and also the three divisions of time (past, present and future).

The seeker has to meditate on these basic ideas, and know that he is *Paramatma*, the all-pervading untainted, luminous self. He is not any of these objects that are inert (*Jada*). Such deep

and unmovable meditation leads one to realise *Paramatma* and free himself from the bondage of *samsara*.

Question : *How does paramatma illumine the world* ?

Answer : Like the Sun illuminating the world.

The fruit of this Knowledge of Kshetra and Kshetrajna is declared in this last verse of the Discourse.

35. क्षेत्रक्षेत्रज्ञयोरेवमन्तरं ज्ञानचक्षुषा ।
भूतप्रकृतिमोक्षं च ये विदुर्यान्ति ते परम् ॥ ३५

Kshetra kshetrajnayor evam antaram jnana chakshusha ।
bhutaprakriti moksham cha ye vidur yanti te param । 35

Meaning : ये *ye* : those who, ज्ञानचक्षुषा *jnanachakshusha* : with the eye of knowledge, एवम् *evam* : thus, क्षेत्रक्षेत्रज्ञयोः *kshetra kshetrajnayoh* : of the Kshetra and Kshetrajna, अन्तरम् *antaram* : distinction, भूत प्रकृति मोक्षम् च *bhutaprakritimoksham cha* : and the liberation from the Prakriti of beings (Avidya), विदुः *viduh* : know, ते *te* : they, परम् *param* : the state of Paramatma (Moksha), यान्ति *yanti* : attain.

Substance : Those who, with the eye of knowledge, know the distinction between *kshetra* and *kshetrajna*, and liberation from the *prakriti* of beings (*avidya*), they attain *Paramatma*.

Commentary : *Evam* : Thus the discrimination between *kshetra* and *kshetrajna*, between the *Drik* and *Drisya*, *Purusha* and *prakriti*, taught in this Discourse is declared to be the direct path to liberation (*Moksha*). Therefore, the seekers should realise the importance of the *yoga*, understand it clearly, and with faith in the Lord's declaration, they should attain *Brahma Jnana*.

Antaram : (Distinction). The intermixing of *Drik* and *Drisya*, of *kshetra* and *kshetrajna*, is the cause of bondage. The individual (*Jiva*) is constantly identifying himself with the *kshetram* (the Field). "I am the body, I am the mind, I am

subject to disease and death, I am suffering, I am now so and so, I belong to this caste, I am wealthy, I am poor," – in this way man, out of '*avidya*' feels that he is the body, and consequently he passes through all the ills of birth and death. In truth, the real man is *Kshetrajna*, *Drik*, *Atma*. So it follows that all the troubles and sorrows pertain to the body and mind only and not to *Atma*. The thoughtful man knows the distinction clearly, and he remains unaffected by the modifications of the body and mind. The others are lost in the flood of *samsara*. It is the eye of knowledge that finds out the difference between the body and the dweller in the body. The whole of this Discourse deals with the sharp distinction between the two.

Bhuta prakriti moksham: From time immemorial, man is bound and deluded by *prakriti* (*Maya*). Now he has awakened to that fact that he is bound, and that he should free himself from bondage. To liberate oneself from the binding veil of '*avidya*' is *Moksha*. *Moksha* is not something to be got from the sky or the underworld. It is not an object. It is pure knowledge, the knowledge that the real man is *Atma* and not the body. If this knowledge is gained by discrimination between *Kshetram* and *Kshetrajna* man attains freedom and perfection. If a man feels that he is the *kshetram*, he is bound by *prakriti*; if on the other hand, he feels that he is *Atma*, *prakriti* has no power over him. How to gain this knowledge is the question for all seekers. The eye of knowledge should be opened. How is this eye of knowledge to open? How can man acquire the spiritual power of discrimination between the objective world and the subjective *Drik*? The Lord has made it clear that He bestows this gift on his devotees who worship Him with faith and love (*tesham satata yuktanam ... dadami buddhi yogam*). Therefore let all people worship the Lord in every way; let them purify the mind with good work for the sake of humanity; let them think and meditate on the truth, and so striving, they shall obtain the discriminatory power to reject *prakriti* and find their identity with *paramatma*. The Lord proclaimed the path and the goal with perfect clearness.

Yanti te param: Every man whoever he is and in whatever position he may be placed, is qualified to undertake this discriminatory path and attain *Moksha* (*Yanti-param*).

Question : *What is Moksha?*

Answer : Freedom from the power of Prakriti (Avidya) is Moksha.

Question : *Who can attain it?*

Answer : Those who know well the distinction between Kshetra and Kshetrajna attain Moksha.

Question : *How is the distinction realised?*

Answer : By the eye of knowledge–Viveka.

Question : *Therefore what is the way to attain Moksha?*

Answer : With the eye of knowledge, to see clearly the distinction between Kshetra and Kshetrajna, is the way to Moksha.

इति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे
श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे क्षेत्रक्षेत्रज्ञविभागयोगो नाम
त्रयोदशोऽध्यायः ॥

Iti Srimad Bhagavadgitasupanishatsu brahmavidyayam yogasastre
Sri Krishnarjuna samvade kshetra kshetrajna
vibhaga yogo nama trayodaso'dhyayah॥

Thus, in the Upanishads of the glorious Bhagavad Gita, in the Science of the Eternal, in the scripture of Yoga, in the dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna ends the
Thirteenth Discourse entitled
Kshetra Kshetrajna
Vibhaga Yoga

(The Yoga of the Division between the field and its Knower.)

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श्री भगवद्गीता

SRI BHAGAVAD GITA

अथ चतुर्दशोऽध्यायः

Atha chaturdasodhyayah

FOURTEENTH DISCOURSE

गुणत्रयविभागयोगः

GUNATRAYA VIBHAGA YOGA

THE YOGA OF THE DIVISION OF THE THREE GUNAS

I. The title of the Discourse :

The *Yoga* of the Division of the three *Gunas*. The characteristic features of the three *Gunas* (*Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas*), how they bind man, what the behaviour of the man would be when these qualities predominate his nature alternately, what effects would be produced by each of these qualities, how man can transcend all of them and reach the state of the *Jivanmukta*, these aspects are explained in this Discourse, and so, it is entitled *Gunatraya vibhaga yoga*.

II. Important points of the Discourse :

1) The excellence of *jnana* and the origin of the world by the union of *prakriti* and *purusha*. (1–4)
2) The nature of the three *Gunas* (*Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas*). (5–13)
3) The effects of the three *Gunas*. (14–18)

4) The way to attain *Paramatma*. (19–20)
5) The qualities of *Jivanmukta* who has transcended the three *Gunas* (21–27)

III. How this Discourse is connected with the previous one :

In the previous Discourse the Lord spoke of the division of *kshetra* and *kshetrajna*, *prakriti* and *purusha*. In the 20th verse, He referred to the qualities arising from *prakriti*. In three verses (20–22) the qualities of *prakriti* and their effects have been discussed. In the 22nd verse it was declared that the three *Gunas* are the cause of man's birth in good and evil wombs. Naturally, the disciple would be eager to know what these *Gunas* are, how they affect man's life, and how man could rise above them. So the Lord, even without any particular question from *Arjuna*, starts this Discourse with the excellence of *Jnana* and proceeds to speak of the three *Gunas* and the way to go beyond them.

श्री भगवानुवाच

1. परं भूयः प्रवक्ष्यामि ज्ञानानां ज्ञानमुत्तमम् ।
यज्ज्ञात्वा मुनयः सर्वे परां सिद्धिमितो गताः ॥ १

Sri Bhagavan uvacha

Param bhuyah pravakshyami jnananam jnanam uttamam
yajjnatva munayah sarve param siddhim ito gatah 1

श्री भगवानुवाच *Sri Bhagavan Uvacha* : The blessed Lord said.

Meaning : यत् *yat* : which, ज्ञात्वा *jnatva* : having known, सर्वे मुनयः *sarve munayah* : all sages, इतः *itah* : from the bond of Samsara (freed), पराम् सिद्धिम् *param siddhim* : highest realisation (Moksha), गताः *gatah* : attained, तत् *tat* : that, परम् *param* : supreme (pertaining to Paramatma), ज्ञानानां *jnananam* : of all kinds of knowledge, उत्तमम् *uttamam* : the highest, ज्ञानम् *jnanam* : wisdom, भूयः *bhuyah* : again, प्रवक्ष्यामि *pravakshyami* : I will tell (you).

Substance : The blessed Lord said : I will declare (to you) that supreme wisdom, the highest of all kinds of knowledge, which having known, all the sages have attained the highest realisation.

Commentary : *Bhuyah* (again)–the Lord, out of compassion for mankind, repeats and re-declares the excellence of that wisdom which takes man beyond all sorrow and death. The Lord attaches the greatest importance to this knowledge, the best and the highest. So the seekers should strive to know this Truth, and free themselves from the bondage of *samsara.*

Jnananam jnanam uttamam : Knowledge is of various kinds in the material world–knowledge of the different sciences and the different arts–each branch of knowledge leading to the understanding of a particular aspect of life and nature. Here the Lord declares that knowledge leading to Self-realisation is the best and the highest (*param*). No other knowledge can unravel the mystery of man's personality and take to the state of freedom and perfection. Without it there is no inner illumination, there is no freedom and perfection. So this knowledge is the highest.

Yat jnatva munayah sarve : The Lord cites the example of the great sages of yore. All of them have attained the Highest by means of this wisdom. There is no exception to the rule–possessing this wisdom all reach the highest goal. The efficacy of a particular medicine is proved by the number of patients who were cured by it. Such a medicine is of universal benefit. So also, this wisdom has worked the miracle on all these who have taken to it with faith and diligence. The bound soul is liberated at once by the knowledge. Such is its excellence. The sages (*munayah* : the thinkers of Truth) have devoted themselves to this knowledge by constant thought and meditation, and so they have achieved the highest perfection. Mere theoritical understanding is not enough. Deep and personal experience of the truth is necessary for Self-realisation.

Param siddhim : *Moksha* is the highest state. The Lord declares it again and again. It is a popular illusion to think of

Moksha as a state of emptiness and nothingness. No. It is a state of positive bliss and blessedness. To him who has experienced it, all other states of wealth and position, power and glamour, appear as insipid, tasteless, low and worthless. So the sages are perfect in their '*vairagya*', because they have attained the highest, and all the lower things up to *Brahmaloka* have no attraction for them at all. Let the aspirants be fully aware of the supreme excellence of the goal they have set before themselves, and be not tempted by any thing else in the world.

Question : *What is the excellence of the wisdom declared by the Lord ?*

Answer : (1) Of all kinds of knowledge, it is the highest.

(2) Possessing it, all the sages have attained Moksha.

Question : *What is the state of Moksha ?*

Answer : It is the supreme state not comparable with any other state in the world.

The excellence of jnana is further stated.

2. इदं ज्ञानमुपाश्रित्य मम साधर्म्यमागताः ।
सर्गेऽपि नोपजायन्ते प्रलये न व्यथन्ति च ॥ २

Idam jnanam upasritya mama sadharmyam agatah ।
sarge'pi no'pajayante pralaye na vyathanti cha ॥ 2

Meaning : इदं *idam :* this, ज्ञानम् *jnanam :* knowledge, उपाश्रित्य *upasritya :* taking refuge in, मम *mama :* My, साधर्म्यम् *sadharmyam :* union with Me (equal state with Me), आगताः *agatah :* having attained, सर्गे अपि *sarge api :* at the time of creation also न उपजायन्ते *na upajayante :* are not born, प्रलये *pralaye :* at the time of dissolution, न व्यथन्ति च *na vyadhayanti cha :* and do not perish, suffer.

Substance : Taking refuge in this wisdom, they attain equal state with Me (become One with Me). They are not born

at the time of creation nor do they perish at the time of dissolution (They are not subject to birth and death).

Commentary : *Mama sadharmyam agatah* : The unparalled excellence of *jnana* is declared most wonderfully here. The sages, possessing this knowledge, became one with God Himself. They assume the state of God. What else can man aspire for ? "*Jnani tu atmaiva me matam*" (7–18). The man of knowledge is God Himself. The devotee becomes the Deity. Such union with the Lord is the effect of this wisdom. The wise man of supreme knowledge is God in essence. There cannot be two Infinities, two Gods. If man cuts off his limiting adjuncts, he becomes the Infinite, the Immortal. It is needless to assert that the man who is seeking such union with the Lord is discharging the highest and noblest of his duties as a human being !

The union with the Lord liberates the sage from birth and death. He becomes '*ajah*', '*nityah*'. There is no 'return' for him. Even at the time of creation he is not born, nor does he perish at the time of dissolution. The cycle of birth and death ('*punarapi jananam punarapi maranam*') stops for ever. He becomes one with the Absolute Sachidhananda. Therefore the only way to free oneself from the ills of *samsara* is to attain *Brahma–Jnana.*

Question : *What is the effect of possessing this wisdom ?*

Answer : (1) Man attains union with God, (2) He is not born at the time of creation, (3) He does not die at the time of dissolution (He is birthless and deathless).

Question : *What then is the way to union with God ?*

Answer : The attainment of supreme knowledge.

The Lord declares that the whole world comes out of the union of Prakriti and Purusha.

3. मम योनिर्महद्ब्रह्म तस्मिन्गर्भं दधाम्यहम् ।
संभवः सर्वभूतानां ततो भवति भारत ॥ ३

Mama yonir mahad brahma
tasmin garbham dadhamyaham ।
sambhavah sarvabhutanam
tato bhavati bharata ॥ 3

Meaning : भारत *bharata :* O Arjuna ! महत् ब्रह्म *mahat brahma :* the great Mulaprakriti, मम *mama :* My, योनिः *yonih :* the originating source of all beings (the Field of origin), तस्मिन् *tasmin :* in it, अहम् *aham* : I, गर्भम् *garbham :* the seed of life (the cause of birth), दधामि *dadhami :* place, ततः *tatah :* thence, सर्वभूतानाम् *sarvabhutanam :* of all beings, संभवः *sambhavah :* birth, भवति *bhavati :* is.

Substance : O Arjuna ! The great *Mulaprakriti* (*Maya*) is My field of origin. In it, I place the seed of life; and thence occurs the birth of all beings.

Commentary : What is the cause, the origin and source of all this universe ? Is it *Prakriti* ? *Prakriti* is *jada* (inert) and cannot be the cause by itself. It is the life-seed of the Lord, placed in *Mulaprakriti* which causes the creation of the Universe.

The union of the sentient Lord with the insentient ***Prakriti***, is the source of all things. So the Lord is the Father of all. He is the seed of all beings. This secret is revealed in this verse. Knowing this, no man should think of himself as low and wretched. The Lord is the real father of all. (*Pita ahamasmi jagatah*). As all are thus the children of the Lord, the seeker should look upon all beings with love, kindness and helpfulness.

Question : *What is the source of all beings ?*

Answer : The union of 'Paramatma' with 'Prakriti'.

4. सर्वयोनिषु कौन्तेय मूर्तयः संभवन्ति याः ।
तासां ब्रह्म महद्योनिरहं बीजप्रदः पिता ॥ ४

Sarva yonishu kaunteya murtayah sambhavanti yah ।
tasam brahma mahad yonir aham bijapradah pita ॥ 4

Meaning : कौन्तेय *Kaunteya :* O Arjuna ! सर्वयोनिषु *sarvayonishu :* in all the wombs of men and Gods etc., यः मूर्तयः *yah murtayah :* whatever forms, bodies, संभवन्ति *Sambhavanti :* are born, तासाम् *tasam :* for them all, महद्ब्रह्म *mahatbrahma :* Mulaprakriti (Maya), योनिः *yonih :* womb, अहम् *aham :* I. बीजप्रदः *bijapradah :* the giver of the life-seed, पिता: *pitah :* father.

Substance : O Arjuna ! What-so-ever forms (bodies) are born, men or Gods etc., for them all the *Mulaprakriti* (*Maya*) is the womb (the mother); and I, the seed giver, am the Father.

Commentary : *Prakriti* is the Mother and *paramatma* is the Father for men and Gods, and every form that is born anywhere in the universe, the Lord is the Father who gives life, and *prakriti* is the Mother, who bears the progeny in her womb.

The three Gunas are born from prakriti and they cause bondage for man.

5. सत्त्वं रजस्तम इति गुणाः प्रकृतिसंभवाः ।
निबध्नन्ति महाबाहो देहे देहिनमव्ययम् ॥ ५

Sattvam rajas tama iti gunah prakritisambhavah ।
nibadhnanti mahabaho dehe dehinam avyayam ॥ 5

Meaning : महाबाहो *Mahabaho :* O Arjuna! प्रकृतिसंभवाः *prakriti-sambhavah :* born of Prakriti, सत्त्वं रजस्तमः इति *sattvam rajastamah iti :* as Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas (Gunas), गुणाः *gunah :* qualities, अव्ययम् *avyayam :* inperishable, देहिनम् *dehinam :* Atma, देहे *dehe :* in the body (or to the body) निबध्नन्ति *nibadhnanti :* bind.

Substance : O Arjuna ! Born of *prakriti*, the three *Gunas*, *Sattva*, *Rajas*, and *Tamas* bind the imperishable *jivatma* in the body.

Commentary : The three *Gunas*, *Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas* are born of *prakriti*. *Atma* is free from them. *Atma* is *Nirguna*,

devoid of these qualities. It transcends them. Even so, the individual man having forgotten his *Atma* and its transcendental nature, associates himself with the *Gunas*, identifies himself with them, and binds himself to the inert perishable body. Thus the Imperishable ever-free *Atma* is lost by the *jiva* who becomes an embodied being subject to all the ills of life and death. This mistaken identity is (*avidya*) ignorance. Man has to release himself from every one of these *gunas*, and rise to the *Atmic* plane which is free and perfect. The *Sattva Guna* is also mentioned as one of the bonds, because it is only in the *Nirvikalpa Samadhi* that man goes beyond all the *gunas* and realises *paramatma*. In that state, there are no qualities or states or thoughts. As the aspirant rises higher and higher, he finds that *Sattva guna* also is like a screen (a thin screen but yet a screen) between him and the ultimate.

The seekers must have a longing to march. *Tamas* has to be conquered by *Rajas*; and *Rajas* has to be purified by *Sattva* and *Sattva* has to be discarded at the end to reach *Atma*. That is *Moksha*.

Mahabaho : Arjuna is addressed as the 'Mighty armed'. He has, no doubt, defeated many powerful enemies in the world, but he has yet to conquer the internal enemies, the three *gunas* with greater strength and higher courage.

Dehe dehinam avyayam : *Atma*, the Lord, the Imperishable Light, is in the body, nearest to man. Therefore, by intense search and clear discrimination one has to discover this even in this life. It is Imperishable. *Atma* is changeless, has no birth and therefore it has no death. All the other things are '*vyayam*' perishable. Each man has to turn the searchlight on himself and know that he has his life and being, not in the perishable body but in the Imperishable *Atma*. He has to strive for purifying himself from the contaminating influence of the three *Gunas* and ascend to the plane of *Atma*. This is the fulfilment of life.

Question : *What is the nature of Atma* ?

Answer : Imperishable.

Question : *What binds the Jiva* ?

Answer : Though the 'jiva' is really 'Atma', yet by his ignorance he is bound by the three 'Gunas'.

Question : *What is the origin of the three Gunas* ?

Answer : 'Prakriti' (Prakriti-sambhavah).

Question : *What is the way to attain liberation* ?

Answer : To reach 'Paramatma', who is beyond the three 'Gunas'.

The three Gunas are explained in three verses. First Sattva Guna is mentioned.

6. तत्र सत्त्वं निर्मलत्वात्प्रकाशकमनामयम् ।
सुखसङ्गेन बध्नाति ज्ञानसङ्गेन चानघ ॥ ६

Tatra sattvam nirmalatvat prakasakam anamayam ।
sukha sangena badhnati jnanasangena cha'nagha ॥ 6

Meaning : अनघ *anagha* : O sinless Arjuna! तत्र *tatra* : among the three Gunas, सत्त्वं *sattvam* : Sattva Guna, निर्मलत्वात् *nirmalatvat* : from its purity, प्रकाशकम् *prakasakam* : light-giving, अनामयम् *anamayam* : untroubled, सुखसङ्गेन *sukha sangena* : by attachment to joy, ज्ञानसङ्गेन च *jnana sangena cha* : and by attachment to knowledge (vritti), बध्नाति *badhnati* : binds (the Jiva).

Substance : O Arjuna! of these three *Gunas*, *Sattva-guna*, by the purity, is light-giving and untroubled; it binds (the *jiva*) by attachment to joy (of the senses) and by attachment to knowledge (*vritti*).

Commentary : As the three *Gunas* are produced from *prakriti*, *Sattva guna* also is a part of *'avidya'*. But it is the pure aspect of *prakriti*. By its purity, it is superior or higher

than the other two *gunas*. So it is no doubt a desirable quality in spiritual progress. But in the perfect Atmic state, even this *Sattva guna* pure and light-giving as it is, is an obstacle, a covering veil to *Atma*. If a pure light is covered by glasses of three colours, different effects are produced. If the glass is dark, the light is dim. If the glass is red, the light casts a red shadow. If the glass is white the light is clear. But the white glass also is a covering veil to the pure light within. The original purity of the light itself is modified by the glass, however clean it might be. So also the *sattva guna* binds the *jiva* by attachment to happiness and knowledge. When a man says 'I am happy', he is attributing to himself the experience of the senses and the mind (*Kshetra*) to himself. The false identification is due to *'avidya'*. This happiness is *kshetradharma*, and it is supperimposed on the *Kshetrajna* (*Atma*) by the ignorance of the *Jiva*. And again, when a person says 'I have knowledge of this or that', he is committing the same error in imposing on *Atma*, the quality of the intellect which is also *Kshetradharma*. Thus *Sattva guna* binds man to happiness and knowledge. Both are the modifications of the mind and intellect. They do not belong to *Atma*. So the Lord exhorts Arjuna to transcend the *Sattva guna* also and reach the Atmic state.

Anagha : Arjuna is sinless, and so, by his purity and stainlessness, he is qualified to receive the highest *Brahma Vidya*.

Question : *What is the nature of Sattva guna* ?

Answer : It is pure, light-giving and untroubled.

Question : *How does it bind man* ?

Answer : It binds man by the happiness of the senses, and the desire for knowledge (vritti)

Question : *What should the aspirant do* ?

Answer : He should go beyond 'Sattva guna' also and reach 'Atma'.

Rajo Guna is explained :

7. रजो रागात्मकं विद्धि तृष्णासङ्गसमुद्भवम् ।
तन्निबध्नाति कौन्तेय कर्मसङ्गेन देहिनम् ॥ ७

Rajo ragatmakam viddhi trishnasangasamudbhavam ।
tannibadhnati kaunteya karmasangena dehinam । 7

Meaning : *Kaunteya:* O Arjuna! रजः *rajah:* the Rajoguna, रागात्मकम् *ragatmakam :* of the nature of passion for objects, तृष्णासङ्गसमुद्भवम् *trishnasangasamudbhavam :* born of desire and attachment, विद्धि *viddhi :* know, तत् *tat:* that (rajoguna), कर्मसङ्गेन *karmasangena :* by attachment to action, देहिनम् *dehinam:* the jiva (Atma), निबध्नाति *nibadhnati :* binds strongly.

Substance : O Arjuna! Know that *Rajoguna* is of the nature of passion for objects, arising from desire and attachment: that *(rajoguna)* binds man *(jiva)* by attachment to action.

Commentary : The word '*Trishna*' means passion for objects not possessed by him. '*Sanga*' means attachment for those things already possessed by him. *Rajoguna* causes both passion and attachment. The effect of this passion is activity to gain this or that object, wealth, name and fame, power and position etc. The mad rush that one sees in the world is all the manifestation of *Rajoguna*. Territories are gained, wars are fought, enemies are put down, name is achieved, fame is obtained and thus in a hundred ways, man works for selfish ends and aims; This is *Rajoguna*. Thus action is the outer manifestation of *Rajoguna*. The *Rajasic* man cannot remain quiet. He is urged into action by the very force of *Rajas*. Action binds him. In this also, there is the false imposition of *Kshetrajna* on the pure and perfect *Atma*. The Lord uses a very strong word '*nibadhnati*', not simply '*badhnati*', when he speaks of the binding power of *Rajoguna* and *tamoguna*.

Question: *What is the nature of Rajoguna?*

Answer : It is passion for objects, and causes desire and attachment.

Question : *How does it bind man?*

Answer : By desire and attachment to action.

Question : *What should the aspirant do?*

Answer : He should free himself from the binding power of 'Rajoguna'.

Tamoguna is explained.

8 तमस्त्वज्ञानजं विद्धि मोहनं सर्वदेहिनाम् ।
प्रमादालस्यनिद्राभिस्तन्निबध्नाति भारत ॥ ८

Tamas tvajnanajam viddhi mohanam sarvadehinam ।
pramadalasya nidrabhis tan nibadhnati bharata ॥ 8

Meaning : भारत *bharata :* O Arjuna! तमः तु *tamah tu :* but Tamoguna, अज्ञानजं *ajnanajam :* born of ignorance, सर्वदेहिनाम् *sarvadehinam :* to all beings, मोहनं *mohanam :* deluding, विद्धि *iddhi :* know, तत् *tat :* that (Tamoguna), प्रमादालस्य निद्राभिः *pramadalasyanidrabhih :* by heedlessness, laziness and sleep, निबध्नाति *nibadhnati :* binds.

Substance : O Arjuna! And *Tamoguna* is born of ignorance, and all beings are deluded by it. It binds fast man by heedlessness, indolence and sleep.

Commentary : *Tamoguna* is the direct effect of ignorance. It deludes man and throws him down into the dark prison-house of *samsara*. The state of the *Jiva* under its influence is like the sun being covered up by thick dark clouds, or like a light covered up by a dark smoke-stained glass. Its deluding power is universally felt, by all, except the *Jivanmuktas*. That is why the word *Sarvadehinam*' is used. Even the most intelligent are sometimes blind to the realities of a situation. They err, fall into lethargy, and forget themselves in beastly sleep. The common run of mankind is directly under its power. Sleep, idleness, incapacity, inefficiency, neglect of duty, shirking of work, all these are *Tamasic* qualities. Each individual can

easily find out for himself what his nature is. If he is negligent, idle and sleepy, it is a sure sign that *Tamas* predominates in his nature.

It is to be understood that no man is dominated only by one *Guna*. The three *Gunas* attending express themselves in the mind, at one stage or other. When *Tamas* dominates, he sleeps, when Rajas dominates he acts, and when *Sattva* comes up, he is calm and enjoys the bliss of power.

The seekers should first of all free themselves from *Tamas* and *Rajas*. These qualities bind man and fling him into the mire of *samsara*. By understanding the nature of these qualities, man should rise above them slowly and gradually.

Bharata : Arjuna is addressed as '*Bharata*' five times repeatedly in this Discourse (vide verses 3, 8, 9, 10 and 12). There should be some special significance to the repetition of this word '*Bharata*'. '*Bha*' means Light, '*rata*' means desire. So *Bharata* means one who desires to possess light i. e. Knowledge. The Lord inspires Arjuna to wake up and strive for true knowledge. "O Arjuna ! Remember your true self, pure, luminous, and free from the taint of the three *Gunas*. You are not the body and mind, the *Kshetra*. You are the imperishable, ever-free and ever-perfect *Atma*. You are *Sachidananda*. Wake up from the sleep. It does not befit you. Realise your true self and be free from all bondage." Such is the Lord's exhortation to his beloved disciple. Hence, probably, the Lord addresses Arjuna as '*Bharata*' repeatedly.

Question : *From what does Tamo guna arise ?*

Answer : From ignorance (Ajnana).

Question : *What is its nature ?*

Answer : It deludes all men.

Question : *How does it bind the Jiva ?*

Answer : By heedlessness, indolence, too much sleep, it binds the *Jiva*.

The Lord concludes the explanation of the three gunas.

9. सत्त्वं सुखे सञ्जयति रजः कर्मणि भारत ।
ज्ञानमावृत्य तु तमः प्रमादे सञ्जयत्युत ॥ ९

Sattvam sukhe sanjayati rajah karmani bharata ।
jnanam avritya tu tamah pramade sanjayaty uta ॥ 9

Meaning भारत *bharata :* O Arjuna ! सत्त्वं *sattvam :* Sattva guna, सुखे *sukhe :* to happiness, सञ्जयति *sanjayati :* attaches, रजः *rajah :* Rajoguna, कर्मणि *karmani :* to action, (sanjayati—attaches), तमः तु *tamah tu :* but Tamoguna, ज्ञानम् *jnanam :* knowledge, आवृत्य *avritya :* covering, प्रमादे *pramade :* to heedlessness, सञ्जयति *sanjayati :* attaches, उत *uta :* but.

Substance : O Arjuna ! *Sattvaguna* attaches (the *Jiva*) to happiness; *Rajoguna* to action and *Tamoguna*, shrouding knowledge attaches to error.

Commentary : This verse is just a summary of the above three verses. The three *Gunas* and their main qualities are restated for easy understanding. *Sattva guna* leads man to knowledge and happiness of a worldly nature: *Rajoguna* prompts man to worldly action prompted by selfishness and *Tamoguna* leads to wrong understanding, sleep and laziness. *Sattvaguna* is like the covering of a pure glass over the light, *Rajoguna* is like the covering of a cane-basket over the light; and *Tamoguna* is like the covering of a pot over the light. In the first instance, light comes out through the glass, the medium being quite pure. In the second instance, some rays of light escape through the chinks of the basket. But in the third instance, the pot being opaque, the light within is totally covered. The state of *Tamas* is utter darkness. The man in darkness stumbles and falls, mistakes objects, takes one thing to be another, and thus commits a number of mistakes.

The pure light of *Atma*, a blissful and ever blessed, is thus shrouded by the three *Gunas*. Man is bound by them. The Lord expresses wonder, how deluded man suffers on account of the powerful influence of *Prakriti* and its qualities.

The Lord explains how the Gunas dominate one another.

10\. रजस्तमश्चाभिभूय सत्त्वं भवति भारत ।
रजः सत्त्वं तमश्चैव तमः सत्त्वं रजस्तथा ॥ १०

Rajas tamas cha'bhibhuya sattvam bhavati bharata ।
rajah sattvam tamas chai'va tamah sattvam rajas tatha । 10

Meaning: भारत *bharatha:* O Arjuna! सत्त्वं *sattvam:* Sattvaguna, रजः *rajah:* Rajoguna, तमः च *tamah cha:* and Tamoguna, अभिभूय *abhibhuya:* having overpowered, भवति *bhavati:* functions, रजः *rajah:* Rajoguna, (abhibhuya=having over=powered), सत्त्वं *sattvam:* Sattva guna, तमः च *tamah cha:* and Tamoguna, (bhavati=functions), तथा *tatha:* so also, तमः *tamah:* Tamoguna, (abhibhuya=have over-powered), सत्त्वं *sattvam:* Sattvaguna, रजः च एव *rajah cha eva:* and even Rajoguna, (bhavati=functions).

Substance: O Arjuna! *Sattvaguna* functions having overpowered *Rajoguna* and *Tamoguna*, *Rajoguna* functions having overpowered *Sattvaguna* and *tamoguna*; so also *Tamoguna* functions having over-powered *Sattva guna* and *Rajoguna.*

Commentary: It is a psychological truth that the three qualities function alternately in every individual, although each man is characterised by the predominance of one of the three qualities. When *Sattvaguna* functions, the other two *gunas* are over-powered. So also when *Rajoguna* functions, the other two are suppressed; when *Tamoguna* is powerful the other two *gunas* are overpowered. Therefore the seekers have to strengthen *Sattvaguna* and by its power supress the other two *Gunas*. That is the first thing to be done in spiritual practice. *Rajas* and *Tamas* should be eliminated and it can be done only by nourishing *Sattvaguna* at all times. If *Sattva* dominates the seeker has ascended to a very high plane, and from there, it would not be far away to rise above it in the realisation of God.

The Lord explains by what means one could find what guna is dominating at a particular time. Sattva guna is taken first.

11\. सर्वद्वारेषु देहेऽस्मिन्प्रकाश उपजायते ।
ज्ञानं यदा तदा विद्याद्विवृद्धं सत्त्वमित्युत ॥ ११

Sarvadvareshu dehe'smin prakasa upajayate ।
jnanam yada tada vidyad vivriddham sattvam ity uta । 11

Meaning: यदा *yada:* when, अस्मिन् देहे *asmin dehe:* in this body, सर्वद्वारेषु *sarvadvareshu:* through all the gate-ways of the senses, प्रकाशः *Prakasah:* light (in the form of the intellect), ज्ञानम् *jnanam:* knowledge, उपजायते *upajayate:* shines, तदा *tada:* then, सत्त्वम् *sattvam:* sattvaguna, विवृद्धम् *vivriddham:* (is) predominant, इति *iti:* thus, विद्यात् *vidyat:* may be known, उत *uta:* indeed.

Substance: When through the gateways of all the senses in the body, the light of knowledge (in the form of intellectual understanding) shines, then it may be known indeed that *Sattvaguna* is predominant.

Commentary: According to the dominant quality in man, his actions are framed. The food he eats, the words he speaks, the way he thinks or walks or acts, – all these activities clearly show what quality is predominant in him at any particular time. When *Sattva* dominates, his speech is soft and pleasing. He walks steadily, he thinks nobly and peacefully, he eats pure food, he reads good books, he keeps the company of the wise. This truth is declared in this verse. We can easily identify the man of *Sattva-guna* and in the same way we can identify people of *Rajo-guna* and *Tamo-guna* by their activities. *Sattva* is light and knowledge. The intellect (*Buddhi*) is then sharp and clear. He sees things as they are, and is not perturbed or troubled by the happenings around him. Such balanced conduct is the quality of *Sattva*. In fact, the external life of a man is itself the measuring metre to find out what his nature is. With some degree of introspection and self-examination, it is quite possible for each

one to find out where he stands in the scale of the *Gunas*. He should proceed from *Tamas* to *Rajas* and from *Rajas* to *Sattva* and from *Sattva* to *Visuddha Sattva* and thence to the transcendental state of Self-realisation.

Question : *What will be the nature of man's life when Sattva-guna dominates ?*

Answer : His senses and mind are filled with the light of knowledge and his conduct is balanced and full of peace. Whoever possesses such conduct, can be discovered as a man of Sattvic nature.

The Lord describes the nature of man under the power of Rajo guna.

12. लोभः प्रवृत्तिरारम्भः कर्मणामशमः स्पृहा ।
रजस्येतानि जायन्ते विवृद्धे भरतर्षभ ॥ १२

Lobhah pravrittir arambhah karmanam asamah spriha ।
rajasy etani jayante vivriddhe bharatarshabha । 12

Meaning : भरतर्षभ *bharatarshabhah :* O Arjuna! रजसि *rajasi :* in Rajoguna, विवृद्धे *vivriddhe :* having become predominant, लोभः *lobhah :* greed, प्रवृत्तिः *pravrithi :* attachment to objects, कर्मणाम् *karmanam :* of actions (desireful and prohibited), आरम्भः *arambhah :* the undertaking, अशमः *asamah :* restlessness (want of restraint), स्पृहा *spriha :* longing, एतानि *etani :* these, जायन्ते *jayante :* arise.

Substance : O Arjuna ! From *Rajo-guna* predominating, greed, activity, the undertaking of (desireful) actions, restlessness and longing,—arise.

Commentary : When *Rajo-guna* dominates, man burdens himself with a hundred kinds of activities. The result is he is restless. Greed and longing urge him to undertake many actions for the fulfilment of his desires. These desires are sometimes selfish and prohibited by the *Sastras*. Longing for objects

drives him into acts of evil and sin. He employs tricks and strategems to realise his ambitions. He has no regard to truth. His mind is externalised. He has no introspection. He is like the ocean troubled by a tempest. His words are harsh and proud. He walks unsteadily because of his mental restlessness. His mind is full of desire for this and that. So he lives a life of passion, and does not know what is peace and real joy. Ravana is an example of *Rajoguna*. *Rajo-guna* therefore leads to evil and self-destruction. It should be overcome by perseverence and firm effort. Peace and joy cannot be found in *Rajo-guna*.

Question : *What is the nature of man dominated by Rajo-guna ?*

Answer : Greed, activity, undertakings (prompted by desire and prohibited by the *Sastras*), restlessness, longing for worldly enjoyments—these are the qualities of the Rajasic man.

Question : *Who attains peace ?*

Answer : He who has freed himself from *Rajas* and *Tamas*.

The qualities of Tamo-guna are described.

13. अप्रकाशोऽप्रवृत्तिश्च प्रमादो मोह एव च ।
तमस्येतानि जायन्ते विवृद्धे कुरुनन्दन ॥ १३

Aprakaso'pravrittis cha pramado moha eva cha ।
tamasy etani jayante vivriddhe kurunandana । 13

Meaning : कुरुनन्दन *Kurunandana :* O Arjuna ! तमसि *tamasi :* from Tamo-guna, विवृद्धे *vivriddhe (sati)*, predominating, अप्रकाशः *aprakasah :* darkness (of intellect), अप्रवृत्तिः च *apravrithih cha :* and inaction (laziness), प्रमादः *pramadah :* heedlessness, मोहः एव च *mohah eva cha :* and also delusion (false understanding), एतानि *etani :* these, जायन्ते *jayante :* arise.

Substance : O Arjuna ! From *Tamo-guna* predominating, darkness (of intellect), inertness, heedlessness, and also delusion (false understanding) arise.

Commentary: The predominating quality of *Tamas* is darkness (i. e.) absence of reason and true understanding. Inert-ness, disinclination towards activity of any kind, delusion and erroneous thoughts and opinions about things, – all these arise from *Tamo-guna.* The man whose nature is dominated by this *guna* can be discovered by what he eats, what he speaks, and by his general behaviour. The sourness of an unripe mango is a suitable comparison for *Tamo-guna.* Kumbhakarna is an example of *Tamo-guna.* It is quite possible for each individual to understand his own nature, whether it is *Sattvic* or *Rajasic* or *Tamasic.* It has already been pointed out that these qualities function in an endless cycle. The same man is *Sattvic* some times, *Rajasic* some times, and *Tamasic* some times. When the *Sattvic* spell comes, to recognise it and confirm it in one's nature is the way to eliminate the other two qualities gradually. Nothing can be done in a day. Perseverence will ultimately conquer all obstacles. So, the seekers have to be vigilent, and when the darker quality tries to dominate him, he should over-come it with all the strength and force of his will-power. The tree should be watered at the roots; If this is done, the unripe fruits become gradually ripe, their sourness is turned into sweetness, and they drop off from the tree of their own accord. The aim is to transcend the three *Gunas* and reach *Atma.* Devotion to the Lord, prayer, meditation and good work, – all these are essential factors in *Sadhana.* By these the *Tamasic* and *Rajasic* tendencies are eliminated from the mind. *Sattva* is purity; This state is very near to *Atma,* And so to come up to the plane of *Sattva* is the first necessary step. And later, the aspirant has to go beyond it also, and become a *Jivanmukta* by Self-realisation.

Question: *What is the nature of Tamo-guna?*

Answer : (1) Darkness (want of reason), (2) inertness, (3) heedlessness, (4) delusion, are the marks of the Tamasic man.

The future life of man under the influence of the three Gunas is explained–First Sattva-guna.

14. यदा सत्त्वे प्रवृद्धे तु प्रलयं याति देहभृत् ।
तदोत्तमविदां लोकानमलान्प्रतिपद्यते ॥ १४

Yada sattve pravriddhe tu pralayam yati dehabhrit ।
tado'ttamavidam lokan amalan pratipadyate । 14

Meaning: यदा तु *yada tu:* when verily, सत्त्वे *sattve:* Sattva-guna, प्रवृद्धे *pravriddhe* (*sati*) : predominating, देहभृत् *dehabhrit:* the Jiva, प्रलयं *pralayam:* death, याति *yati:* meets, तदा *tada:* then, उत्तम विदाम् *uttama vidam:* of the knowers of the highest, अमलान् *amalan:* of the pure, लोकान् *lokan:* worlds, प्रतिपद्यते *pratipadyate:* (the Jiva) attains.

Substance: When verily *Sattva-guna* is predominating, the *Jiva* (embodied one) meets death, he then attains the worlds of the highest and of the pure.

Commentary: It is declared that the future birth of man is determined by the *Guna* that dominates in him at the time of death. If *Sattva-guna* predominates, then the *Jiva* attains the pure worlds which the wise go to. *Sattva-guna* is the effect of long practice in self-perfection. *Tamas* and *Rajas* have to be eliminated by *Nishkama Karma,* by devotion and by studious understanding of the Truth. If man cultivates *Sattva-guna* through a long life-time of steady practice, then, even at the time of death, his mind remains pure, calm, and full of peace. Leaving the body in that state is good, because it takes him to higher worlds of purity and knowledge. So the seekers have to be vigilent and cautious, and observe how they are progressing on the path of self-purification. They should remember that their future life in other worlds will be strictly determined by their state of mind in this life. They should refrain from any evil and sinful acts, because they are caused by impure *Rajas* and *Tamas.* Otherwise, they shall have to suffer in low worlds of a painful nature.

Dehabhrit: (The embodied being, man). This word is significant, because it shows that man holds the body. The house is different from the tenant who lives in it. The tenant is

not the house itself. He uses the house. So also, the *Jiva* is placed in the house of the body, but he is not the body. He changes the body by death, even as a tenant leaves one house and goes to dwell in another one.

The man who wears a particular dress or ornament is different from the dress and ornament that he wears. By keen intellectual perception, this truth becomes clear to man. When the body-identification (*dehatmabuddhi*) is given up, man naturally discovers that he is the untainted, pure and perfect *Atma*.

Uttamavidam lokan : The man of *Sattva-guna* attains the pure worlds of the wise. But that is not the end. He has to reach the birthless and deathless state of *Paramatma*.

Question : *Where does he go who dies with Sattva-guna predominating at the time of death ?*

Answer : He goes to the spotless worlds attained by the knowers of the Highest.

The future life of the Rajasic and Tamasic man is declared.

15. रजसि प्रलयं गत्वा कर्मसङ्गिषु जायते ।
तथा प्रलीनस्तमसि मूढयोनिषु जायते ॥ १५

Rajasi pralayam gatva karmasangishu jayate ।
tatha pralinas tamasi mudhayonishu jayate । 15

Meaning : रजसि *rajasi :* in Rajo guna (predominating), प्रलयं *pralayam :* death, गत्वा *gatva :* meeting, कर्मसङ्गिषु *karmasangishu :* among those attached to action, जायते *jayate :* is born, तथा *tatha :* so, तमसि *tamasi :* in Tamo guna, प्रलीनः *pralinah :* dying, मूढयोनिषु *mudhayonishu :* in the wombs of the senseless, जायते *jayate :* is born.

Substance : Meeting death in *Rajo-guna* (predominating) he is born among those attached to action; dying in *Tamo-guna* he is born in the wombs of the senseless (of animals, birds and so on).

Commentary : The man of *Rajo-guna* is born among men attached to action. So he acts continuously, binds himself by such desireful actions and is reborn in the same state. Thus continuously, birth after birth, urged by his own selfish desires and passions, he leads a restless and agitated life. He is bound to the wheel of *karma*.

The *Tamasic* man is born in the wombs of the senseless birds, beasts and reptiles and so on. What horrible punishment it is to be born as a wolf or a jackal or a snake etc. ? What rational man is there who does not shudder at this horrible prospect of his future life ? Is there any man who would willingly be born in the wombs of the wretched and the ignorant ? No. Every man wants to go up, and not fall down. Human nature aspires for higher and higher things. So let the aspirants beware of the horrible consequences of their future life. If they fail to heed the warnings of the Lord, Sri Krishna Paramatma they have to suffer. The Lord is revealing the future in the present. Having eyes one should see. Having ears one should hear. Having reason, one should understand. Devotion, dispassion, and knowledge (*Bhakti*, *Vairagya* and *Jnana*), one needs to save himself from future misery and wretchedness.

Question : *Where is the Rajasic man born after death ?*

Answer : Among men attached to action.

Question : *Where is the Tamasic man born after death ?*

Answer : In the wombs of the senseless of (animals, birds reptiles, and so on.

The fruits of the Sattva, Rajas and Tamas are declared.

16. कर्मणः सुकृतस्याहुः सात्त्विकं निर्मलं फलम् ।
रजसस्तु फलं दुःखमज्ञानं तमसः फलम् ॥ १६

Karmanah sukritasya'huh sattvikam nirmalam phalam ।
rajasas tu phalam duhkham ajnanam tamasah phalam । 16

Meaning : सुकृतस्य कर्मणः *sukritasya karmanah :* of good actions, सात्त्विकम् *sattvikam :* of a Sattvic nature, निर्मल

nirmalam: pure, फलम् *phalam:* (is) the fruit, रजसः तु *Rajasah tu:* of Rajas verily, दुःखम् *dukkham :* (is) suffering, फलम् *phalam :* the fruit, तमसः *tamasah :* of Tamas, अज्ञानम् *ajnanam :* is ignorance, फलम् *phalam :* the fruit, आहुः *ahuh :* (they the elders) say.

Substance : The fruit of good actions of *Sattvic* nature is pure; the fruit of *Rajas* is suffering verily; the fruit of *Tamas* is ignorance (*ajnana*).

Commentary : Every man wants happiness and not suffering. But he should do only those actions from which peace and joy arise. His actions should be pure, beneficent, and selfless. Then he enjoys peace and joy which is the fruit of *Sattva-guna*. Suffering and ignorance arise from *Rajo-guna* and *Tamo-guna*. So the wise man should avoid all actions of a Rajasic nature, because they verily produce suffering. Knowing this, no thoughtful man would willingly do wrong things in anger and passion. Knowing that fire burns, who would thurst his hand into it? No one. So also, one should clearly perceive that the terrible effects of *Rajas–Kama* and *Krodha* (*Rajo guna samudbhavah*) are very dangerous. Through them man is passing through hell even in this world. He suffers from pain, restlessness, horrid dreams, fears, deluding hopes, disappointments, despair, desperation and despondency. Such is *Rajo-guna*.

And now when we come to *Tamoguna*, it is all darkness and ignorance. Under its power man lives like an animal. He eats, sleeps, and copulates. He has no idea of any thing pure and holy. He lives an animal life Nay, he is worse than animals. Being born as man and yet live the life of animals is against one's own humanity. The human form then counts for nothing. The saint and the sinner are both clad in the human garb. But there is the difference of pole to pole between the two. *Tamas* is the enemy of most men. It should be overcome in every way possible.

Rajasastu phalam duhkham : Let this declaration of the Lord be kept in view by every seeker, whatever he thinks and acts. If one wants peace and joy, *Rajas* should be given up. There is no other way.

Ajnanam tamasah phalam : Ignorance is the seed-bed of all other evils. *Rajas* arises from *Tamas*. Knowledge removes both *Tamas* and *Rajas*. Knowledge pure and perfect! That should be our goal. *Tamas* should be given up as enemy number one for all mankind.

Question: *What is the fruit of Sattvic work ?*

Answer : Pure joy.

Question: *What is the fruit of Rajas ?*

Answer : Suffering.

Question : *What is the fruit of Tamas ?*

Answer : Ignorance (Ajnana).

Question : *What then is the way to peace and joy ?*

Answer : Man should avoid Tamasic and Rajasic actions and take refuge in pure Sattva.

The effects of the three Gunas are declared.

17. सत्त्वात्सञ्जायते ज्ञानं रजसो लोभ एव च ।
प्रमादमोहौ तमसो भवतोऽज्ञानमेव च ॥ १७

Sattvat samjayate jnanam rajaso lobha eva cha ।
pramadamohau tamaso bhavato'jnanam eva cha । 17

Meaning : सत्त्वात् *sattvat :* from Sattva, ज्ञानम् *jnanam :* knowledge, सञ्जायते *sanjayate :* arises, रजसः *rajasah :* from Rajas, लोभः एव च *lobha eva cha :* greed only, (arises), तमसः *tamasah :* from Tamas, प्रमाद मोहौ *pramadamohau :* heedlessness and false understanding (Bhrama). भवतः *bhavatah :* arise, च *cha :* and, अज्ञानम् एव *ajnanam eva :* ignorance itself, (from it arises).

Substance: From *Sattva*, Knowledge; from *Rajas*, greed, and from *Tamas*, heedlessness, moha and ignorance itself arise.

Commentary: The Lord is an expert in methods of instruction. He wants to impress on the mind of the disciple, the effects of the three *Gunas*. And for this purpose he repeats the same ideas in different ways. A good teacher, when he is instructing children, follow the same method. When these ideas are fundamental truths, they should be repeated and re-asserted, so that they sink into the mind of the hearers. So Lord Krishna is re-declaring the same law again and again for the better understanding of his beloved disciples.

Ajnanam eva cha: Ignorance itself arises from *Tamas*. And *Ajnana* verily is the cause of bondage, and *samsara*. The lovers of freedom and knowledge should wage eternal war with that demon till victory is achieved.

Question: *What arises from Sattva-guna?*

Answer : Knowledge.

Question: *What arises from Rajo-guna?*

Answer : Greed.

Question: *What arises from Tamo-guna?*

Answer : Heedlessness, forgetfulness, delusion and ignorance itself arise from Tamas.

The future life of man of the three Gunas is stated.

18. ऊर्ध्वं गच्छन्ति सत्त्वस्था मध्ये तिष्ठन्ति राजसाः ।
जघन्यगुणवृत्तिस्था अधो गच्छन्ति तामसाः ॥ १८

Urdhvam gacchanti sattvastha madhye tisthanti rajasah ।
jaghanya guna vrittistha adho gacchanti tamasah ॥ 18

Meaning: सत्त्वस्थाः *sattvasthah*: (men) in Sattva guna placed, ऊर्ध्वं *urdhvam*: upwards (the world of the Devas,) गच्छन्ति *gacchanti*: go, राजसाः *rajasah*: the Rajasic, मध्ये *madhye*: in the middle (the world of men), तिष्ठन्ति *tishtanti*:

dwell (are born), जघन्य गुण वृत्तिस्थाः *jaghanyagunavrittisthah*: abiding in the functions of the lowest Guna (Tamo guna), **तामसाः** ***tamasah***: the tamasic, अधो *adhoh*: to lower worlds (born as animals and so on), गच्छन्ति *gachanti*: go.

Substance: The *Sattvic* people (after death) go the higher worlds; the *Rajasic* dwell (are born) in the world of men (the middle one); the *Tamasic*, abiding in the functions of the lowest *Guna*, go down into the lower worlds (or born in the wombs of animals, birds, and so on).

Commentary: *Sattwa-guna* takes man to the higher worlds, and *Rajo-guna* to the middle worlds, and *Tamo-guna* plunges man into the lower worlds. So it is the duty of man to take refuge in *Sattva* and ascend to the purer worlds of light and knowledge.

Question: *After death where do the Sattvic people go?*

Answer : To the higher worlds of light and knowledge.

Question: *Where do the Rajasic stay?*

Answer : They dwell in the middle world (of men).

Question: *Where do the Tamasic go?*

Answer : To the lower worlds.

The path to Moksha is declared.

19. नान्यं गुणेभ्यः कर्तारं यदा द्रष्टानुपश्यति ।
गुणेभ्यश्च परं वेत्ति मद्भावं सोऽधिगच्छति ॥ १९

Na'nyam gunebhyah kartaram yada drasta'nupasyati ।
gunebhyas cha param vetti mad bhavam so'dhigacchati ॥ 19

Meaning: यदा *yada*: when (man), द्रष्टा *drashta* (*bhutva*): knowing that he is the witness, the seer, गुणेभ्यः *gunebhyah*: than the Gunas, अन्यम् *anyam*: other, कर्तारम् *kartaram*: agent, न अनुपश्यति *na anupasyati*: does not see, (Atmanam=

himself), गुणेभ्यः च *gunebhyah cha:* from the Gunas, परम् *param:* distinct, वेत्ति *vetti:* knows, सः *sah:* he, मद्भावं *madbhavam:* My being, अधिगच्छति *adhigacchati:* attains to.

Substance: When (man) sees no agent other than the *Gunas* and knows that which is higher than the *Gunas*, he attains to My being.

Commentary: This verse and the next are very important. The seekers who are enquiring into Truth should understand the idea and keep it always in their mind. It is the direct path to *Brahma jnana* (*Moksha*), liberation from the bondage of *samsara*. Whatever actions are performed by man, the agent invariably, is the *Gunas* (i. e.), the mind which is composed of the three *Gunas*. Except the three *Gunas* there is no other thing as the mind. The mind through the agency of the senses and the body, causes all actions. The senses and the body, are instruments. The mind is the directing agent. What is bound is the mind; and what attains liberation is the mind. There is no other agent or enjoyer. *Atma* is distinct from this mind.

Therefore, the seeker has to understand that he is entirely distinct and separate from the three *Gunas*, that he is *Atma*, and hence that he is not at all the agent (*karta*) or enjoyer (*bhokta*). When this distinction is clearly seen, man remains as the seer (*Drik*). He realises *Atma*. So the first step towards liberation is to know that the real man is the seer (neither *Karta nor Bhokta*). 'O *Jiva*! do not get mixed up with the three *Gunas*, which constitute the mind; keep aloof from them: see what they do; but never get confused with them; they are not you; you are distinct from and separate from them. You are in truth, *Atma*.' – This is Lord's compassionate teaching.

In the spectacular drama of the universe, the real actor is the mind, the three *gunas*. And the *Atma*, like the lighting in the theatre, is shedding its light on all, while remaining unattached to any thing that is taking place on the stage. He is like the screen of the theatre on which the picture is projected.

The picture is constantly changing and displaying various colours, characters and actions. The screen is not affected by the picture, whether it is a tragedy or a farce or anything else. Even so, the *Atma* stands really unattached and unaffected by the wailings and laughters of the mind, by the functions of the senses, and by the activities of the body. This is the highest Truth. All that is considered happiness or sorrow is only the modifications of the three *gunas*. Out of delusion, the *Jiva* identifies himself with the *gunas*, and attributes to himself what is *Deha–dharma* and *Mano–dharma*. He says, 'I am born; I am sick or healthy; I die; I am old or young;' Thus he is clearly identifying himself with the body. He says again, "I am happy; I am sad; I am angry; I am calm; I am dull or I am bright." Thus he is identifying himself with the mind and its changes. That is bondage This idea of false identification is what is called '*avidya*'. The moment when the falsehood is found out, that very moment the *Jiva* knows that he is *Atma*, and there is no more a '*Karta*' or a '*Bhokta*' to be bound to the world. All bondage is shattered at one stroke.

Madbhavam so adhigacchati: Knowing that the *gunas* are the cause of all actions and knowing that he is the '*drashta*', the *Jiva* becomes Siva, the *nara* (man) becomes Narayana, the *Jana* (man) becomes Janardana. So from this very moment onwards, the seeker should give up all foolish notions that he is this or that, and firmly fix himself in the state of *Paramatma*, beyond all the modifications of the body and the mind.

Adhi gacchati: The Lord declares that man attains God by this discrimination. Let the aspirants have faith in the Lord's words, drive away all weakness and cowardice and attain the highest.

Anupasyati: The Lord uses this term to suggest that one should see clearly and doubtlessly that he is not the *Karta* (the doer).

The truth is that man is really free from all the actions of the body and the mind. They are all caused by *Prakriti*, the mind composed of the three *gunas*. But there is a danger here. Any

one, even a vile sinner, can claim guiltlessness or freedom from his criminal acts on the ground that he does not commit anything as he is only a '*sakshi*' (witness). They do foul and filthy things in the name of religion and philosophy. Such imposters and pretenders suffer the fate that awaits them. Let it be known once for all that the man of Self-realisation can never indulge in any of the mean and wretched, foul and filthy things, pertaining to the flesh. He is pure like the Sun, pure like Ganges, pure like the purest that the human mind can conceive of. This purity in word, thought and deed is the hall-mark of the real *Sadhu*. He cannot cheat or hate any one; he cannot be tempted by the attractions of the flesh; he cannot utter lies, he cannot injure others; he cannot be selfish in anything whatsoever. He is serene, calm, knowing, full of bliss, kind and compassionate, and his perfection is recognished by the wise, even as the bees recognise the honeyed flowers.

Question : *What is the real cause of all the actions that man does ?*

Answer : The three Gunas (the mind composed of the Gunas).

Question : *What is the real nature of man ?*

Answer : As soon as man knows that the three Gunas are the cause of all actions, and that he is the Sakshi (witness) he attains Paramatma. He is liberated. He is a Jivanmukta.

Question : *From this, what is the way to self-realisation, Moksha ?*

Answer : "The three Gunas are the real doers of all actions; I am different from them; I am Atma." — This clear knowledge is the way to Moksha.

The Lord declares that he who transcends these Gunas attains liberation (Moksha).

20. गुणानेतानतीत्य त्रीन्देही देहसमुद्भवान् ।
जन्ममृत्युजरादुःखैर्विमुक्तोऽमृतमश्नुते ॥ २०

Gunan etan atitya trin dehi dehasamudbhavan ।
janma mrityu jara duhkhair vimukto'mritam asnute । 20

Meaning : देही *dehi* : the embodied one (Jiva), देहसमुद्भवान् *dehasamudbhavan* : cause of the body, एतान् *etan* : these, त्रीन् गुणान् *trin gunan* : three gunas, अतीत्य *atitya* : having transcended, जन्ममृत्यु जरादुःखैः *janmamrityu jaraduhkhaih* : from birth, death, oldage, pain, विमुक्तः *vimuktah* : freed, अमृतम् *amritam* : immortality, (Moksham : the Atmic state, अश्नुते *asnute* : attains.

Substance : Having transcended these three *Gunas*, the cause for the birth of the body, the *Jiva*, freed from birth, death, decay and pain, attains immortality.

Commentary : *Gunan* : *Sattva* is included here, because it is also one of the *Gunas*. As it is pure and transparent, it allows us to perceive *Atma* through the thin veil. But even *Sattva* has to go, before man attains the Atmic state, which is above the functions of the mind and '*Buddhi*'.

Why are these *Gunas*, man's enemies ? They cause birth, and so they are enemies. They cause *samsara*, and man cannot free himself from bondage on account of them. If one body drops, another comes, and this goes on endlessly. Many millions of births have already come and gone from these *Gunas* as the seed. Many more will come unless the seed and the tree are totally destroyed by *Jnana*.

But what is the harm if birth comes to a person ? There is the greatest danger. With birth comes death also. Who loves death ? No one. With the body comes old age and disease. Who likes old age and disease ? No one. With the body comes different kinds of sorrow. Who wants sorrow ? No one. No man likes death, disease, old age and sorrow. And yet, with the birth of the body, all these evils come inevitably. When there is no body, these evils are not there. So to be perfectly free, man has to give up the attachment to the body. There is no other way. So, the aspirant is here taught, the way to attain to the deathless and therefore birthless state of *Paramatma*. It is immortality (*amritam*).

Vimuktah : Freedom from the three *Gunas* should be complete and perfect. Hence the more emphatic form is used.

Question : *By what is the body caused ?*

Answer : By the three *Gunas*.

Question : *How can man attain Immortality ?*

Answer : By transcending the three *Gunas*.

Question : *What is the harm of the birth of the body ?*

Answer : Old age, death, disease, pain, suffering and sorrow-are all caused by the birth of the body So the aspirant should strive for Immortality by attaining the Atmic state.

Question : *What is Moksha ?*

Answer : It is free from birth and death.

Arjuna desires to know the marks of the man who has transcended the three Gunas.

अर्जुन उवाच

21. कैर्लिङ्गैस्त्रीन्गुणानेतानतीतो भवति प्रभो ।
किमाचारः कथं चैतांस्त्रीन्गुणानतिवर्तते ॥ २१

Arjuna uvacha

Kair lingais trin gunan etan atito bhavati prabho ।
kimacharah katham chaitams trin gunan ativartate ॥ 21

अर्जुन उवाच *Arjuna uvacha* : Arjuna said.

Meaning : प्रभो *Prabho* : O Lord ! एतान् *etan* : these, त्रीन् गुणान् *trin gunan* : three Gunas, अतीतः *atitah* : transcended, कैः लिङ्गैः *kaih lingaih* : by what marks ? (possessing), भवति *bhavati* : becomes ? किं आचारः *kim acharah* (*bhavati*) : What is his conduct ? एतान् त्रीन् गुणान् *etan trin gunan* : these three gunas, कथम् च *Katham cha* : and how, अतिवर्तते *ativartate* : goes beyond, crosses.

Substance : O Lord ! What are the marks of the man who has crossed over those three *Gunas* ? What is his conduct ? How does he go beyond these three *Gunas*.

Commentary : Arjuna naturally wished to know the qualities and conduct of the man who has transcended the *Gunas*. In the 2nd Discourse also, Arjuna wanted to know the manner and conduct of the *Sthitaprajna*, and the Lord gave an elaborate discription of the state of the *Sthitaprajna*. Here also, once again, Arjuna desired to know the character and conduct of the sage who has gone beyond the three *Gunas*.

Kairlingaih : By what marks can he be distinguished from others ? This is a necessary question. For, one comes across quite a good number of imposters and pretenders who are filled with all objective desires, attachments and tendencies and yet who claim to be free and perfect. Such spurious sages and prophets cannot betray the world any more when we can test their conduct by the Lord's measuring scale. Further if the conduct of the real sage is clearly known, the aspirants may strive to follow their example in their own personal conduct and model their life accordingly. Arjuna desires to know the actual way of life followed by the sage who has transcended the three *gunas*. The description of the *Sthitaprajna* (Chp. 2), of the *Jnani* (Chp. 13), and now of the *Gunatita*,-these are *vivid* pictures of the conduct of the great sages, *bhaktas* and *Jnanis*. By comparison and contrast one may know where he stands in the scale of spiritual values. The real *Sadhu* is distinguished from the imposter. Dry philosophy is separated from direct experience. The false atmosphere of spirituality spread over the country shall be dispelled, and true devotion and *Jnana* shall reign supreme in the hearts of all men.

Kim acharah : A similar question was asked by Arjuna in the second chapter about *Sthithaprajna (Kim asita vrajeta kim.* Chp. 2). Conduct, practical life is the essence of all religion and philosophy. The Gita particularly inssits on practical life according to highest Truth. This is very essential, for there is the delusion that mere reading of a few religious books

is all that is needed to become a *Jnani*. Such false notions have left people mere theoreticians, who quail and fail by the least crisis of loss and bereavement. While asserting that *Atma* is deathless, people tremble at the thought of death. While asserting that the world is an illusion, people desperately cling to all their positions and possessions. This is not practical religion. In fact, religion is intended to lift man out of all the fearful delusions of life. When this is not realised, religion remains as mere talk and nothing more. That is why the Gita wants to test man's wisdom or devotion by practical conduct in every-day life.

More over, while it is necessary to know the goal clearly, it is even more necessary to know the path leading to the goal with perfect clearness. When once the goal is fixed, all that is needed is practice (*sadhana*). When the place to reach is decided the next thing is to know the way leading to it. There is no use of thinking of the destination always without starting on the journey. When the journey begins and continues the destination is reached automatically. When the *Sadhana* is sincere and truthful, the *Sadhya* is realised of its own accord. So the Gita lays more emphasis on *Sadhana* than *Sadhya*. The supreme goal is stated briefly, and the path leading to it elaborately. This is the special distinction of the Lord's teaching.

The Lord's answer to Arjuna's question is one of the most illuminating part of the Gita. Those who aspire for liberation should study, understand and practice this aspect of the Gita message.

Question : *What did Arjuna want to know from the Lord ?*

Answer : (1) The marks of the *Gunatita*, and (2) his conduct.

The Lord explains the marks and conduct of the Gunatita (the Jivanmukta) :

श्री भगवानुवाच

22. प्रकाशं च प्रवृत्तिं च मोहमेव च पाण्डव ।
न द्वेष्टि संप्रवृत्तानि न निवृत्तानि काङ्क्षति ॥ २२

23. उदासीनवदासीनो गुणैर्यो न विचाल्यते ।
गुणा वर्तन्त इत्येव योऽवतिष्ठति नेङ्गते ॥ २३

24. समदुःखसुखः स्वस्थः समलोष्टाश्मकाञ्चनः ।
तुल्यप्रियाप्रियो धीरस्तुल्यनिन्दात्मसंस्तुतिः ॥ २४

25. मानापमानयोस्तुल्यस्तुल्यो मित्रारिपक्षयोः ।
सर्वारम्भपरित्यागी गुणातीतः स उच्यते ॥ २५

Sri Bhagavan uvacha

Prakasam cha pravrittim cha moham eva cha pandava ।
na dvesti sampravrittani na nivrittani kankshati । 22

Udasinavad asino gunair yo na vichalyate ।
guna vartanta ity eva yo'vatisthati ne'ngate । 2

Sama duhkha sukhah svasthah sama lostasma kanchanah ।
tulyapriyapriyo dhiras tulyanindatmasamstutih । 24

Manapamanayos tulyas tulyo mitraripaksayoh ।
sarvarambhaparityagi gunatitah sa uchyate । 25

Meaning : पाण्डव *Pandava* : O Arjuna ! यः *yah* : who, संप्रवृत्तानि *sampravrittani* : when (they) occur, प्रकाशं च *prakasam cha* : happiness, (derived from Sattva Guna), प्रवृत्तिम् च *pravrittim cha* : and action (derived from Rajo Guna), मोहम् एव च *moham eva cha* : and also delusion (arising from Tamo Guna), न द्वेष्टि *na dveshti* : does not hate, निवृत्तानि *nivrittani* : when they (the functions of the Gunas) are absent, न काङ्क्षति *na kankshati* : does not long for them, उदासीनः *udasinah* : like one indifferent, unconcerned, आसीनः *asinah* : seated, यः *yah* : who, गुणैः *gunaiah* : by the Gunas, न विचाल्यते *na vichalyate* : is not agitated, गुणाः *gunah* : the Gunas, वर्तन्तः *vartantah* : are functioning, इति एव *iti eva* : thus only, यः *yah* : who, अवतिष्ठति *avatishtati* : (knowing) is self-centred,

नेङ्गते *na ingate :* does not move, समदुःखसुखः *samaduhkhasukhah :* equal–minded in sorrow and happiness, स्वस्थः *svasthah :* established in Atma, समलोष्टाश्म काञ्चनः *samaloshtasma kanchanah :* regarding a clod a stone and gold alike, तुल्यप्रिया प्रियः *tulya priya priyah :* the same to the dear and to the non-dear, धीरः *dhirah :* firm (possessing knowledge of Atma and Anatma), तुल्य निन्दात्म संस्तुतिः *tulya nindatma samstutih :* the same in censure and praise, मानावमानयो : *manavamanayoh :* in honour and dishonour, तुल्यः *tulyah :* the same, मित्रारि पक्षयोः *mitrari pakshayah :* towards friends and enemies, तुल्यः *tulyah :* the same, सर्वारम्भ परित्यागी *sarvarambha parityagi :* abandoning all undertakings (all sense of doership) or renouncing all karmas being established in Brahman), सः *sah :* he, गुणातीतः *gunatitah :* crosed over the Gunas, इति *iti :* thus, उच्यते *uchyate :* is said.

Substance : The blessed Lord said : O Arjuna ! He (the *Gunatita*) does not hate when the three *Gunas* bring happiness (from *Sattva*), action (from *Rajo–guna*), and delusion (from *Tamo–guna*); nor does he long for them when they are absent.

He sits like one unconcerned, unaffected by the *Gunas*, knowing that the *Gunas* are functioning, and is not moved.

He is equal–minded in joy and sorrow, established in Self; regards a clod, a stone, and gold alike; the same in pleasant and unpleasant things; heroic, equal in censure and praise.

He is the same in honour and dishonour; the same towards friends and enemies; abandons all action; he is said to be *Gunatita.*

Commentary : In the 22nd verse, it is declared that the *Gunatita* is indifferent to the functioning of three qualities. *Sattva* may bring happiness; *Rajas* may bring action; *Tamas* may cause delusion. When these effects are produced, he does

not hate them. Nor does he long for them, when they are absent. In other words, he is indifferent whether the *Gunas* are existing or not. They may function or they may cease to function; he is not at all concerned. He does not hate them when they function, nor does he long for them when they cease to function.

The effects of the three *Gunas* are mentioned here to lend force to the idea that the *Gunatita* is above the *Gunas*, and so their functioning or non-functioning is no concern for him. We have to understand that the *Gunatita* would not be subject to the power of the *Gunas* like the common people. Otherwise he would not be a *Gunatita.* The point is that one should be regardless of these qualities, and their functions, having established himself in the Self. Whether it is the knowledge of *Sattva*, or the activity of *Rajas*, or the delusion of *Tamas*, he (the *Gunatita*) neither hates nor longs for them. He has nothing to do with them at all.

The permanent characters of the *Gunatita* strike our attention. (1) Immovable firmness (*Nischalatvam* , (2) Equal–mindedness (*samatvam*).

(1) The difference between the *Yogi* and the common man is seen in critical moments. Small things perturb the common man. Little disappointments, worries, anxieties, throw him off the balance. He becomes restless, discontended and dispirited by any kind of adversity. The *Gunatita* is exactly the opposite type. He is imperturbable, undaunted by anything that may happen. The waves may dash against the mountain endlessly, but the mountain remains immovable. So, difficulties and dangers may come to the *Gunatita* but he remains immovable. Is the sun in any way troubled by the storms and tempests, the thunders and lightnings that occur under him ? So is the *Gunatita.* He is above these storms and tempests, resting firmly in *Atma.* He does not move away from *Atma.* He knows full well that whatever happens in the world is only a mental phenomenon with which he has no contact whatsoever. Such a man is the very embodiment of courage and boldness. It is not the bravado

of the ordinary mortals, but the courage that comes from *Brahma Jnana*. This is the first and the greatest mark of the *Gunatita*. The *Gunatita* is in this sense a *Sthithaprajna*.

(2). Equal-mindedness is the next distinguishing quality of the *Gunatita*. Towards friends and enemies, in pleasure and pain, honour and dishonour, censure and praise, toward worthless and valuable things like stone or gold, he is equal-minded. *Suka*, when he visited the Court of *Janaka*, was put to severe test by the latter. He was made to stay without food for some days, he was not even recognised for some days, he was provided the highest luxuries for some days,–in these ways, his equanimity was tested by the King. *Suka* stood the test, because he was a perfect *Jnani*, a *Gunatita*. Such great sages have their life and being in *Atma* and so they do not recognise the objective world and react to it in the way that common people do. To them the objective world and all that is occuring in it, is merely a grand show without any reality in it. They are only reflected images of the mind. The pairs of opposites can touch the mind, but they cannot touch *Atma*, which is beyond *Buddhi* (*Yo buddheh paratastu sah*).

Sarvarambhaparityagi : It would be appropriate to interpret this as a person who has given up the sense of doership in all undertakings, a person who has given up all desire-prompted actions. (*Kamya Karma*) or a person who is in constant absorption in the Self, and so does not act in any way.

Yah : The state of *Gunatita* can be achieved by any one who possesses the above-mentioned qualities. There is no bar for any earnest soul to attain this state by the accident of birth or wealth or position. In fact, the aim of the *Gunatita* is to transcend all distinctions caused by *Prakriti*. Such a man who has gone beyond the three *Gunas* is the *Gunatita*.

Question : *What are the marks of the Gunatita* ?

Answer : The *Gunatita* does not hate when the three *Gunas* bring happiness, action and delusion; nor does he long for them when they are absent. He sits like one unconcerned, unaffected by the *Gunas*, knowing the the *Gunas* are functioning and is not moved. He is equal-minded in joy and sorrow, in a stone and gold alike: the same in pleasant and unpleasant things, heroic, and equal in censure and praise. He is the same in honour and dishonour, the same towards friends and enemies; He abandons all action. Such a person is said to be *Gunatita*.

Those who worship Lord with undivided devotion, transcend the Gunas and attain realisation (Brahmasakshatkara).

26. मां च योऽव्यभिचारेण भक्तियोगेन सेवते।
स गुणान्समतीत्यैतान्ब्रह्मभूयाय कल्पते ॥ २६

Mam cha yo'vyabhicharena bhaktiyogena sevate ।
sa gunan samatityai'tan brahmabhuyaya kalpate ॥ 26

Meaning : यः *yah* : who, माम् च *mam cha* : and Me, अव्यभिचारेण *avyabhicharena* : undivided, sole, भक्तियोगेन *bhakti yogena* : the yoga of devotion, सेवते *sevate* : worships, सः *sah* : he, एतान् *etan* : these, गुणान् *gunan* : Gunas, समतीत्य *samatitya* : having crossed, ब्रह्मभूयाय *brahmabhuyaya* : to become Brahman (Jivanmukta), कल्पते *kalpate* : is fit.

Substance : He who worships Me only with undivided mind by the *yoga* of devotion, having crossed the three *Gunas* completely, is fit for becoming Brahman (the state of the *Jivanmukta*).

Commentary : *Paramatma* is beyond the three *Gunas*. To go beyond them is the way to become Brahman. But how to cross over the *Gunas* ? A great deal of enquiry, self-control, meditation, is necessary for it. But here, the Lord declares that self-realisation is possible for one who is devoted to Him with single-minded devotion (*Bhakti*). *Bhakti* helps the devotee to transcend the *Gunas*. It is to be noted that in every Discourse, whatever may be the *yoga* taught in it, the Lord emphasises

Bhakti as the universal element in all kinds of practices. In this Discourse in which pure knowledge is taught, the Lord introduces the idea of *Bhakti* and the need for devotion at the end. Whether man takes to *Karma Yoga*, *Jnana Yoga* or *Dhyana Yoga*, he should cultivate *Bhakti*, devotion to the Lord. This devotion is the life-force for all *yogas*. Without it, no spiritual progress is possible. *Bhakti* of the lower type is not enough. It should be '*avyabhicharini*' (i. e.) undivided, not attached to anything else except the Supreme Lord. Pure *Bhakti* requires the highest renunciation. The mind should be centred in the Lord totally and completely. The world has no place in the mind of the true devotee. The Lord only and nothing else-that is the devotee's attitude. When this attitude is confirmed, the devotee easily goes beyond the *Gunas*, and the *Brahmanubhuti* comes to him of its own accord. To be constantly thinking of the Lord, his wonderful power, beauty, joy, peace, bliss and blessedness, to love Him as the life of his life and the soul of his soul, to see Him in all beings, in all actions, and thoughts, to sing His name and glory, to offer up every thing to Him,-this is *Bhakti*. As *Bhakti* is more congenial for embodied human beings, the Lord emphasises the need for it in attaining the highest state of the *Gunatita* and *Brahmajnana*.

Samatitya : This term is used to show that the devotee can transcend the *Gunas*, totally and completely.

This verse is the Lord's answer to Arjuna's question "*Katham chai tan stringunan ativartate*" (How can a person go beyond those three *Gunas* ?). By firm devotion, man acquires knowledge which takes him beyond the *Gunas* to *Paramatman*. This is the way to transcend the *Gunas*.

The Lord declares that He is the Supreme Brahman.

27 ब्रह्मणो हि प्रतिष्ठाहममृतस्याव्ययस्य च ।
शाश्वतस्य च धर्मस्य सुखस्यैकान्तिकस्य च ॥ २७

Brahmano hi pratistha'ham amritasya'vyayasya cha ।
sasvatasya cha dharmasya sukhasyai'kantikasya cha ॥ 27

Meaning : हि *hi :* because, अहम् *aham :* I, अमृतस्य *amritasya :* of the immortal, अव्ययस्य च *avyayasya cha :* and of the immutable, शाश्वतस्य धर्मस्य च : *sasvatasya dharmasya cha :* and of the eternal Dharma, एकान्तिकस्य सुखस्य च *ekantikasya sukhasya cha :* and of absolute bliss, ब्रह्मणः *brahmanah :* the Brahman, प्रतिष्ठा *pratishta :* abode (i. e. I am Brahman).

Substance : Because I am verily the abode of the immortal, of the immutable, of the eternal *Dharma*, of bliss Absolute, of Brahman indeed.

Commentary : Having declared that His devotee crosses the three *Gunas* and attains *Paramatma*, the Lord here reveals his true nature as the Supreme Brahman Himself. Lord Krishna, the teacher of the Gita is not a mortal, but *Paramatma* Himself, the Supreme Brahman. Sri Krishna is not simply the son of Yasoda, the cow-herd boy of the Brindavan, He is verily *Paramatma*. He is the eternal *Dharma*; He is bliss Absolute; He is the Immortal and the Immutable. Therefore who worships Him with undivided mind, by the law (*Yadbhavam tadbhavati-*) that man becomes That which he contemplates, transcends the *Gunas* and becomes one with the Lord. What is that *Paramatman*? The Lord explains by three attributes :

1) That is Immortal (deathless and therefore birthless); That is Immutable (unchanging).

2) That is eternal *Dharma*;

3) That is bliss absolute.

By the first (Immortality and Immutability), the '*sat*' aspect of Brahman is stated; by the second (Eternal *Dharma*), the '*chit*' aspect of Brahman is stated; and by the third (Bliss absolute), the '*ananda*' aspect of Brahman is stated. Thus the Lord declares that He is Brahman, Existence Absolute, Knowledge Absolute and Bliss (*Ananda*) Absolute.

For the sake of easy forms of worship, the Lord appears as the son of Yasoda, as the Cow-herd boy of **Brindavan**, as the

lover of the Gopis, as the Charioteer of Arjuna (*Parthasarathi*) and in a hundred other detectable forms. He, the Lord, is again all the '*Avataras*'. He is Rama, the son of Dasaratha; He is Narasimha, the destroyer of Hiranyakasipu and the saviour of Prahlada; He is Vamana; He is all this Universe, and all its spectacular manifestations. There is nothing beyond Him. He is all. The devotees should always remember that whatever form they may worship, the Lord is the supreme *Sachidananda* Brahman.

By this verse, Dualism, Qualified *monism* and *Advaita* are declared to be One in the end. The end is the same though the means are different. The Lord whom the Dualists worship as the repository of all blessed qualities (Ananta kalyana gunabhi-rama) is not different from the Brahman of the sages. While the '*Sat*' aspect of Brahman is common to both, the devotee emphasises the '*ananda*' aspect of Brahman, and the *Jnani* the '*chit*' aspect. But it is declared here that '*Chit*' (Knowledge) is not separate or distinct from '*Ananda*' (bliss). There is no essential difference between *Jnana* and *Bhakti*; for, both types of *sadhana* culminate in the realisation of the Supreme. Each man can choose his own method and form of worship and reach the goal.

Question: *Who is Lord Krishna?*

Answer : He is the Supreme Brahman.

Question: *What is the nature of Brahman?*

Answer : 1) Immortal and Immutable (*Sat*).
2) Eternal 'Dharma' (*Chit*)
3) Bliss Absolute (*Ananda*).

इति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे
श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे गुणत्रयविभागयोगो नाम
चतुर्दशोऽध्यायः ॥

Iti Srimad Bhagavadgitasupanishatsu brahmavidyayam yogasastre
Sri Krishnarjuna samvade gunatraya vibhaga
yogo nama chaturdaso' dhyayah ||

Thus, in the glorious Upanishads of the Bhagavad Gita, in the Science of the Eternal, in the scripture of Yoga, in the dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna ends the
Fourteenth Discourse entitled
Gunatraya Vibhaga Yoga

(The Yoga of the Division of the Three Gunas.)

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श्री भगवद्गीता

SRI BHAGAVAD GITA

अथ पंचदशोऽध्यायः

Atha panchadasadhyayah

FIFTEENTH DISCOURSE

पुरुषोत्तमप्राप्ति योगः

PURUSHOTTAMAPRAPTI YOGA

THE YOGA OF THE ATTAINMENT OF THE SUPREME PURUSHA

I. Title of the Discourse :

Purushottama means *Paramatma*. The Lord is known as *Purushottama* because he is distinct and higher than the perishable (*kshara*) being of the body (*Kshetram*) and the Imperishable (*akshara*) being known as *Jiva*. Who *Purushottama* is, what his nature and form is, by what path He could be attained, what the fruit by attaining Him is, – all this theme is explained and declared in this Discourse, and so it is called *Purushottamaprapti yoga*.

II. Important points of the Discourse :

1) The tree of *Samsara* and the way to attain God. (1– 6)

2) Enquiry into *Jivatma*. (7–11)

3) The Universal Existence of God, and the power of the Lord. (12–15)

4) Explanation of the *Ksharapurusha* and *Aksharapurusha* and *Purushottama*. (16–20)

III. How this Discourse is connected with the previous one :

In connection with the Division of the *Gunas*, the Lord declared that undivided devotion to Him is the sure way to transcend the *Gunas*. Such a devotee would go beyond the *Gunas* and attain liberation (*Brahmasakshatkara*). The 26th verse (14th Discourse) proclaims the Lord to be none other than the Supreme Eternal *Satchidananda Parabrahman*. This Discourse is a natural sequence to the previous one. How can man attain such single-minded devotion ? What is the nature of *Purushottama* ? How to attain Him ? What is its fruit ? These questions are answered in this Discourse. Pure *Bhakti* demands complete renunciation of all worldly things and attachments. Perfect *Vairagya* is the mark of the true devotee. The Discourse, therefore opens with a description of the tree of *Samsara*, and the need to cut it by the sword of detachment.

The tree of Samsara is described.

श्री भगवानुवाच

1. ऊर्ध्वमूलमधः शाखं अश्वत्थं प्राहुरव्ययम् ।
छन्दांसि यस्य पर्णानि यस्तं वेद स वेदवित् ॥ १

Sri Bhagavan uvacha

Urdhvamulam adhahsakham asvattham prahur avyayam ।
chandamsi yasya parnani yas tam veda sa vedavit ॥ 1

श्री भगवानुवाच *Sri Bhagavan Uvacha :* The blessed Lord said.

Meaning : यस्य *yasya :* to which, छन्दांसि *chandamsi :* Vedas, पर्णाणि *parnani :* leaves, अश्वत्थं *asvattham :* (that) Asvattha tree of Samsara, ऊर्ध्वमूलम् *urdhvamulam :* with roots above, अधः शाखं *athassakham :* with branches down, अव्ययम्. *avyayam :* not perishing (till knowledge is attained, प्राहुः *prahuh :* (the elders or the Vedas) say, तत् *tat :* that, यः *yah :* who, वेद

Veda : knows, सः *sah :* he, वेदवित् *Vedavit :* (is the knower of the Vedas).

Substance : The Blessed Lord said : They (the wise or the *Vedas*) speak of the *Asvattha* tree (of *Samsara*) having its roots above and branches below, the *Vedas* its leaves, and indestructible (till knowledge is gained); He who knows that is the Knower of the *Vedas*.

Commentary : *Samsara* is compared to a tree. It is unlike any other tree that we see in nature. All trees have roots below and branches above. But this tree of *Samsara* has roots above and branches below. What is the explanation ?

1) From *Paramatma* originate *Avyakta*, *Mahadahankara* and from them arise the whole universe along with all beings So *Paramatma* is the highest source (above), and down below we find the Universe and the beings in it. So this tree is said to have its roots above (in *Paramatma*) and its branches below. *Paramatma* is the root, and the universe the branches of this tree of *Samsara*.

2) Another explanation may be offered. The work of *Maya* is to show everything upside down. The impure appears pure and the pure impure; the good appears to be bad, and the bad good, the unreal appears to be real and the real unreal; pain appears to be pleasure and happiness pain. Accordingly *Patanjali* describes *avidya* thus- "*anitya asuchi duhkha anatmasu nitya suchi sukhatmakhyatir avidya*". A tree reflected in water appears upside down. So is the tree of *Samsara* reflected through *Maya*.

3) A tree by the side of the road in its natural form is not an obstacle. But if it is torn up by the roots and falls across the road, it becomes an obstacle to the way-farers with its branches down and the roots sticking up. To the pilgrims on the path of *Brahmavidya*, this tree of *Samsara* is definitely an obstacle.

Asvattham : '*svah*' means 'tomorrow,' and '*na sthah*' means 'not existing'. So *Asvattha* means 'not existing tomorrow'

This tree of *Samsara* is of doubtful existence. No one can say whether it exists the next day or even the next hour, or even the next minute. It is perishable. It is rightly described as '*Asvatthah*', because of its perishable and mutable character. But it is described here as '*avyayam*'-not perishing. How ? The explanation is, here *Samsara*, like a flood, flows ceaselessly, birth and death occurring in an endless series for man. It continues till the moment when true knowledge is attained. It stops and disappears then. So it is in one sense imperishable and in another sense perishable. To the ignorant it exists continuously. To the wise it ceases to exist. So the word '*avyayam*' here should not be interpreted as eternal. If it is eternal, nothing can destroy it. In the third verse, the Lod instructs Arjuna to strike down the tree with the sword of *Vairagya*.

Yas tam veda sa vedavit : He who understands the nature of *Samsara*, is the knower of the *Vedas*. The essence of the *Vedas* is known by him. The *Vedas* declare that this reflected Universe proceeds from *Paramatma*, who is the origin and source of all. From Him, this Universe is projected as the tree is projected from the seed. So the sage who knows this is the real knower of the *Vedas*.

Question : *Describe the tree of Samsara ?*

Answer : It has its roots above and the branches down. It is imperishable till 'jnana' is attained. The 'Vedas' are its leaves.

Question : *Who is the knower of the Vedas ?*

Answer : He who understands the nature of the tree of 'Samsara' (i. e.) who knows that the tree is projected out of 'Paramatma', who knows that 'Paramatma' is its seed and origin, is the knower of the 'Vedas'.

The tree of Samsara is further described.

2. अधश्चोर्ध्वं प्रसृतास्तस्य शाखा ।
गुणप्रवृद्धा विषयप्रवालाः ।
अधश्च मूलान्यनुसंततानि ।
कर्मानुबन्धीनि मनुष्यलोके ॥ २

Adhas cho'rdhvam prasritas tasya sakha
gunapravriddha vishayapravalah ।
adhas cha mulany anusamtatani
karmanubandhini manushyaloke ॥ 2

Meaning : तस्य *tasya :* of the tree (of Samsara), शाखाः *sakhah :* branches, गुणप्रवृद्धाः *gunapravriddah:* nourished by the three Gunas (Sattva, Rajas and Tamas), विषयप्रवालाः *vishayapravalah :* sense-objects (colour, sound etc.) are its (buds) tender shoots, अधः च *athah cha :* and from below (inert matter), ऊर्ध्वं च *urdhvam cha :* upwards (upto Brahma loka), प्रसृताः *prasritah :* spread, मनुष्यलोके *manushya loke :* in the world of men, कर्मानुबन्धीनि *karmanubandhini :* causing bondage of action, मूलानि *mulani :* its roots, अधः च *athah cha :* below (and upwards), अनुसंततानि *anusantatani :* are stretched forth (firmly or deep-rooted).

Substance : The branches of this tree (of *samsara*) are nourished by the *Gunas*, and the sense-objects are its tender buds; it spreads downwards (from inert matter) and upwards (to *Brahmaloka*); its roots, causing bondage by action are stretched forth (deeply stuck) downwards and upwards also.

Commentary : The tree of *samsara* is vividly described here. It is not a small tree. It has grown strong and firm from millions of births, and has deeply established its roots in the world. Its branches spread upto *Brahma loka.* Its roots are the past *samskaras* of action. The three *Gunas* are its branches. Its tender shoots grow by enjoyment of sense-objects. How then to cut this mighty tree ? The branches should be struck by purifying the mind of the three *Gunas*; the tender shoots should be cut by dispassion towards sense-enjoyments; and the roots should be destroyed by removing the past tendencies of the mind. As all trees are sustained by their roots, this tree of *samsara* is sustained by deeply impregnated '*samskaras*' or '*vasanas*', and when they are destroyed, the whole tree falls to the ground being struck at the roots. It is there that the operation should be conducted. When the roots are cut, the branches, shoots and buds wither away in a short time. The wise man therefore should cultivate dispassion (vairagya) towards sense-objects. Dispassion brings about the cessation of the impulses and urgings of action. Where there is no action, there is no bondage, resulting from *Karma.* If, on the other hand, man nurtures the *vasanas* with *raga* and *dvesha*, he can never cut the tree and gain his freedom. He will be bound to *samsara* almost endlessly.

Question : *How is the tree of samsara further described ?*

Answer : Its branches are nourished by the three Gunas. Sense-objects are its buds. It spread upwards and downwards. Its roots are actions prompted by desires. It is firmly established in the world of men.

This tree of samsara should be cut by the sword of detachment, and man should strive to reach the state of Paramatma.

3. न रूपमस्येह तथोपलभ्यते।
नान्तो न चादिर्न च संप्रतिष्ठा ।
अश्वत्थमेनं सुविरूढमूल ।
मसङ्गशस्त्रेण दृढेन छित्त्वा ॥ ३

4. ततः पदं तत्परिमार्गितव्यं
यस्मिन्गता न निवर्तन्ति भूयः ।
तमेव चाद्यं पुरुषं प्रपद्ये
यतः प्रवृत्तिः प्रसृता पुराणी ॥ ४

Na rupam asye'ha tatho'palabhyate
na'nto na cha'dir na cha sampratistha ।
asvattham enam suvirudhamulam
asangasastrena dridhena chittva ॥ 3

Tatah padam tat parimargitavyam
yasmin gata na nivar tanti bhuyah ।
tam eva cha'dyam purusam prapadye
yatah pravritih prasrita purani ॥ 4

Meaning: अस्य *asya :* of the tree of samsara, रूपम् *rupam :* form, तथा *tatha :* in that manner (as described above), इह *iha :* in this world (by men attached to Samsara,) न उपलभ्यते *na upalabhyate :* is not perceived, अन्तः *antah :* (its) end, न *na :* is not seen, आदिः च न *adih cha na :* and beginning, is not seen, संप्रतिष्ठा च न *sampratishta cha na :* and (middle) existence also is not seen, सुविरूढ मूलम् *suvirudhamulam :* firm-rooted, एनम् *enam :* this, अश्वत्थं *asvatham :* tree of Samsara, दृढेन *dhridena :* strong, असङ्गशस्त्रेण *asanga sastrena :* the axe of non-attachment, (to sense-objects and possessions), छित्त्वा *cchitva :* having cut asunder, ततः *tatah :* then, यस्मिन् *yasmin :* in which state, गताः *gatah :* having entered, भूयः *bhuyah :* again, न निवर्तन्ते *na nivartante :* (men) do not **return** (to Samsara), यतः *yatah :* from whom, पुराणी *purani :* beginningless, प्रवृत्तिः *pravrittih :* action (Samsara), प्रसृताः *prasrita :* steamed forth, तम् एव च आद्यं पुरुषम् *tam eva cha adyam purusham :* that primeval Purusha alone, प्रपद्ये *prapadye,* take refuge in, (thus thinking), तत् पदम् *tat padam :* that state (Paramatma), परिमार्गितव्यम् *parimargitavyayam :* should be sought (searched for).

Substance: The real form of this tree of *Samsara* is not perceived (in the manner described above) in the world (by men attached to the world). Its beginning, its end and its middle (existence) is not seen. Cut this firm-rooted *Asvatha* tree of *Samsara* with the strong axe of non-attachment.

Then, that state of *Paramatma*, entering which there is no return (to *Samsara*) and from whom this ancient tree of *Samsara* has been projected, having taken refuge in that primeval *Purusha* (with *Bhakti*), should be sought for.

Commentary: This tree of *Samsara* is not seen by man in the form described in the first and second verses. Why? Attached to *Samsara*, the ignorant do not see it as such. They do not see its beginning or end or its present state of existence. They have not made any attempt to enquire into its real nature. They are immersed in the flood of *Samsara* and do not really know what it is, how it has come, and what its nature is etc. In darkness, the real nature of objects cannot be seen. Thus people live in *Samsara* and die in *Samsara* without understanding its true nature. This is *Maya*. Only a few awakened souls try to enquire into its true nature. Among them only a few try to release themselves from its bondage, and among them a few are able to cut the bond and attain liberation. The idea is that the darkness of ignorance is such that man is not able to realise the slavery and bondage which *Samsara* has imposed on him from time immemorial.

This tree of *Samsara* is described as '*suvirudhamulam*' with roots deeply and firmly fixed in the world, and it has spread its branches far and wide, even upto *Brahma loka*. But its firmness and strength need not frighten us. Provided the weapon is sufficiently sharp and powerful, any tree can be felled to the ground. The Lord shows the weapon with which this tree can be cut. It is '*asanga sastram*'. Non-attachment to the world, and its sensual attractions and temptations is the axe which cuts the tree of *Samsara*. In other words, it is dispassion (*vairagya*). What a wonderful weapon to *smash* the tree of *samsara*! But the axe should be sharp and strong. Lukewarm and fitful *vairagya* (*manda vairagya*) is not enough. It should be blazing, burning, all-consuming '*vairagya*'. How else can this mighty tree be cut? That is why the Lord uses the word '*dridhena*' as attribute to '*asanga sastra*', This axe of dispassion cuts the very root of the tree and there is no more delusion or bondage. It is like distroying the main wheel of a huge factory-machine. When the main wheel is stopped, all the innumerable smaller wheels stop automatically. We need not stop every small wheel. So also, when the roots of the tree are cut, the branches, the buds and all other things wither away of their own accord. This non-attachment should be both external and internal.

But the aim is yet to be realised. *Vairagya* eliminates the obstacles on the path of Self-realisation. Having given up the '*drisya*', the objective world, the next step is to hold fast to the

'*Drik*' the seer. This is important. It is not enough to clear the debts; one should acquire property, and then only he will be safe. The rejection of the sense-world is like clearing the debts. So along with '*vairagya*' the seeker should possess *jnana*, knowledge of *Paramatma*. He should know that his real nature is *Atma*. Then his bliss is full and unhindered. That is why the Lord *teaches*-then, the *Atma* is to be searched for (*parimargitavyayam*).

This is the highest state for a human being, because, having once attained it, man does not return to *samsara* again (*na nivartanti bhuyah*). It is the law that man has to return to this world again and again whatever world he goes to by his good work until he realises *Paramatma*. That is the eternal state of bliss and blessedness. The wise attain it and are forever at rest.

The path to take for this search for the highest Truth is clearly stated here. The secret is revealed-"*tam eva purusham prapadye*"-"I take refuge in that *Purusha* alone." This is the spirit prompting the aspirant in his search for *Paramatma*. It is a deeply devotional attitude, a surrender unto the Lord, in the search for *Atma*. To him who has pure devotion, *Brahma-jnana* is easily attained.

Question : *What is the nature of the tree of samsara ?*

Answer : Its roots are firmly fixed in the world.

Question : *How should it be cut ?*

Answer : It should be cut with strong axe of non-attachment to the objective world.

Question *What should be done after the tree is cut ?*

Answer : He should search for the state of 'Paramatma'.

Question: *What is the nature of Paramatma ?*

Answer : Having attained Him, man does not return to this world (utno *Samsara*). From Him, the universe is projected. He is the primeval God.

The Lord declares the qualities of those who attain Paramatma.

5. निर्मानमोहा जितसङ्गदोषा
अध्यात्मनित्या विनिवृत्तकामाः।
द्वन्द्वैर्विमुक्ताः सुखदुःखसंज्ञै-
र्गच्छन्त्यमूढाः पदमव्ययं तत् ॥ ५

Nirmanamoha jitasangadosha
adhyatmanitya vinivrittakamah ।
dvandvair vimuktah sukhaduhkhasamjnair
gacchanty amudhah padam avyayam tat ॥ 5

Meaning : निर्मानमोहाः *nirmanamohah* : free from pride (Ahamkara) and delusion, जितसङ्ग दोषाः *jitasanga doshah* : victorious over the evil of attachment to the objective world, अध्यात्म नित्याः *adhyatma nityah* : dwelling constantly in the Self, विनिवृत्त कामाः *vinivritta kamah* : turned away from all desires (free from Vasanas), सुखदुःख संज्ञैः*sukhaduhkha samgyaih* : known as happiness and suffering, द्वन्द्वैः *dvandaih* : from pairs of opposites, विमुक्ताः *vimuktah* : freed completely, अमूढाः *amudhah* : the undeluded (wise), तत् *tat* : that (declared before), अव्ययम् *avyayam* : eternal, पदम् *padam* : state (Moksha), गच्छन्ति *gacchanti* : reach (attain).

Substance : Free from pride (*ahamkara*) and delusion, conquering the evil of attachment (to the sense-world), dwelling constantly in the Self, freed from the pairs of opposites called pleasure and pain, the undeluded reach that eternal state (*Moksha*).

Commentary : In this verse, the qualities of the wise who attain the non-returning state *Moksha*, are clearly described. Six qualities are mentioned (1) Freedom from pride (*ahamkara*) and delusion, (2) Conquest of the evil of attachment to the sense-world. '*Sanga*' is attachment; it is evil. This evil should be given up by detachment and dispassion. (3) Dwelling

constantly in the Self. Here the word '*nitya*' is to be noted. Constant memory and understanding are necessary. At first, the seeker spends some time in *Atma nishta* and then he comes out into the objective world. This period of Self-centered meditation should be extended gradually till he is firmly established in the Self always. Constancy is emphasised many times by the Lord, because '*avidya*' overtakes man the moment when he forgets *Atma*. To forget *Atma* is itself '*Avidya*'. So, constancy is prescribed as a rule for the seekers. We come across three types of men in the world. The first and the highest are those who are constantly in contact with Self; the second are those who contemplate *Atma* for some time, and then go into worldly activities; and the third are those who remain immersed in worldly life always. The second type have the opportunity of rising to the highest state. The third type of people are the lowest and most miserable. They are plunged in ignorance and totally devoid of any enlightenment what-so-ever.

4) *Vinivrittakamah* : This, the fourth quality is essential for all seekers. This is combined with '*adhyatmanityah*' in the same line in the verse. The two qualities are thus brought together, and they are the very essence of enlightenment. The aspirants for *Moksha* should repeat this line, think of it, meditate on the idea and model their life accordingly. The first is '*tathvajnanam*' and the second is '*Vasanakshyam*'. So the line, '*adhyatma nitya vinivritha kamah*' is the sum and substance of all spiritual practice. The first is the state of the '*Drik*', and the second is the state of *drisyarahitvam*'. The *Sastras* declare that both these are to be practised simultaneously. In fact, they are the two sides of the same coin (*Moskha*). When *Drik* (*Atman*) is attained, there is no *Drisyam*. (5) Freedom from the pairs of opposites, known as pleasure and pain.

6) *Amudhah* : Freedom from delusion. The spiritual *sadhana* undertaken constantly keeps away delusion, and thus the sages live in the light of perfect knowledge.

What is the reward of following the above practices? People reach the immortal state of *Paramatma*. They leave

away all other things as they are unreal, impure, sorrow-breeding and perishable.

Question : *What is the state of Paramatma ?*

Answer : It is unchanging and eternal.

Question : *Who can attain it ?*

Answer : He who acquires the above six qualities.

The state of Paramatma is further described.

6. न तद्भासयते सूर्यो न शशाङ्को न पावकः ।
यद्गत्वा न निवर्तन्ते तद्धाम परमं मम ॥ ६

Na tad bhasayate suryo na sasanko na pavakah ।
yad gatva na nivartante tad dhama paramam mama ।   6

Meaning : तत् *tat* : that (state of Paramatma), सूर्यः *suryah* : Sun, न भासयते *na bhasayate* : cannot illumine, शशाङ्कः *sasankah* : Moon, न *na* (*bhasayate*) : cannot (illumine), पावकः *pavakah* : Fire, न *na* (*bhasayate*) : cannot (illumine), यत् *yat* : what, गत्वा *gatva* : having reached, न निवर्तन्ते *na nivartante* : (Men), do not return (not take birth), तत् *tat* : that, मम *mama* : My, परमम् *paramam* : supreme, धाम *dhama* : abode.

Substance : Neither the sun, nor the moon, nor the fire can illumine that (state of *Paramatma*), which having reached, (men) do not return (take birth again); That is My Supreme Abode.

Commentary : The Sun, Moon and Fire illumine the material objects. The eye illumines the Sun; and the *buddhi* (intellect) illumines the eye; and *Atma* illumines the intellect (*buddhi*). So the whole universe including the shining objects like the Sun and the Moon, are illumined by perceiving senses and the intellect, which receive their light ultimately from *Atma*. So *Atma* is the light that illumines every thing. All other things shine by the reflected light of *Atma*. In the *Mundakopanishad* this is clearly explained and proved (*Na tatra suryo bhati*).

Yad gatva na nivartante : Those who have reached the state of *Atma* do not again fall into the miserable pit of *Samsara.* From any other world in the universe, man has to return and take birth again. They have not the power to end sorrow. Only *Paramatma* has that power. The blessed state of Self-realisation, full of bliss, is *Moksha.* The same idea has been expressed in the previous verse also. (*Yasmin gata na nivartanti bhuyah*).

The Lord declares that state to be the Supreme Abode.

The Jiva is a portion of Paramatma, the Lord.

7. ममैवांशो जीवलोके जीवभूतः सनातनः ।
मनः षष्ठानीन्द्रियाणि प्रकृतिस्थानि कर्षति ॥ ७

Mamai'va'mso jivaloke jivabhutah sanatanah ।
manah sashthani'ndriyani prakritisthani karshati ॥

Meaning : मम एव *mama eva* : even My, सनातनः *sanatanah* : eternal, अंशः *amsah* : portion, part, जीव लोके *jiva loke* : in the world of life, जीवभूतः *jivabhutah* : having become a soul, प्रकृतिस्थानि *prakritisthani* : abiding in Prakriti, मनः षष्ठानि *manah shashtani* : with mind as the sixth, इन्द्रियाणि *indriyani* : the senses, (seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling and touching), कर्षति *karshati* : (the Jiva) draws (to itself).

Substance : Only a portion of My eternal Self has become the soul (*Jiva*) in the world of livings; he (the *Jiva*) draws (to itself) with mind as the sixth sense, the five senses, abiding in *Prakriti*.

Commentary : *Mamaivamsah* : The *Jiva* (*Jivatma*) in truth, is not different from *Paramatma.* The *Jiva* is directly *Paramatma.* Both are eternal.

But the *Jiva* (*Jivatma*) being deluded by *Maya,* is identifying himself with the vehicle of the body and the senses and consequently suffers all the ills and pains which come to the body. The *Jiva* is imposing on himself all the limitations of the body and the mind. If the body is weak or sick, the *Jiva* says "I am

sick;" if the mind is sad, the *Jiva* says 'I am sad'. Thus the *Jiva* who in truth, is *Paramatma* Himself, has developed a false identification and a fictitious personality, limited by time, space and causation. This is ignorance (*avidya* or *Maya*).

All the qualities of limitless ether are to be found in the ether of the pot; But the limiting form of the pot seems to limit the limitless ether. This limitation is not true. It is illusory. Ether is not bound by any thing. When the pot is broken, ether remains as it is. There is no change. Thus all the blessed attributes of *Paramatma* are present in the *Jiva* (*Jivatma*). When the *Jiva* gives up this false identification and remembers his original state, he realises that He is *Paramatma*, and nothing other than He.

When the *Jiva* is himself *Paramatma*, what are these ideas of high and low, good and bad and so on ? All men are divine, all men are equal. So knowing the wise are filled with love for all, and consider all as equal. The Lord's declaration gives infinite strength to everyman. For, the same individual who formerly was dreaming of himself as big and small, happy and unhappy, living and dying, now is awakened to the tremendous understanding of his own true nature. Now he simply laughs at the foolish little self which he was displaying in the world on his personality. No more is there any fear of death or suffering, for he, is not the body (*upadhi*).

Karshati : The *Jiva* in his ignorance draws the senses to himself with the mind. The senses are in *Prakriti*. The deluded *Jiva* draws *Prakriti* to himself and lives a kind of existence confined by the activities of the senses. The body is (*jada*) inert, and so does not claim *Jiva* as its own. It is the *Jiva* who claims the body to be his. He says "this (body) is mine". So also he says of many things. 'This house is mine, this wealth is mine, this man is my father or son' and so on. All this is gross misappropriation of things which do not really belong to him. So the word '*Karshati*' is used by the Lord.

What the *jiva* has to do now is to give up the false role which he has been playing on the stage of the world. He should

give up calling himself Mr so and so. This Mr so and so refers to the body which the *Jiva* is not. He should know that this world is not his real Abode. He is *Paramatma*. That is his real state. With firm and unflinching determination, he should contemplate his true Self, where he would attain the highest bliss and blessedness. This false world and false self bring misery, and death.

This verse is the Lord's assertion about the Divine nature of man. May this idea give courage, strength and peace to all mankind.

Question : *What is the nature of the Jiva* ?

Answer : He is a portion of 'Paramatma'. He is eternal.

Question : *How does he think of himself* ?

Answer : He thinks of himself as the body and the senses, and lives a physical existence full of pain and suffering.

Question : *Why does he think so* ?

Answer : By the power of 'Avidya'.

Question : *What should the jiva do now* ?

Answer : He should give up the impure sense-world and remember his identity with 'Paramatma' and remain in that state. That is 'Moksha'.

What happens when the Jiva leaves the body and takes a new birth.

8. शरीरं यदवाप्नोति यच्चाप्युत्क्रामतीश्वरः ।
गृहीत्वैतानि संयाति वायुर्गन्धानिवाशयात् ॥ ८

Srirm yad avapnoti yac cha'py utkramati'swarah ।
grihitvai'tani samyati vayur gandhan iva'sayat ॥ 8

Meaning : ईश्वरः *isvarah* : The Jiva who is the Lord of the aggregate of the body, senses and the mind, यत्त च अपि *yat cha api* : and even when, उत्क्रामति *utkramati* :- leaves the body, यत् *yat* : when, शरीरं *sariram* : (another) body, अवाप्नोति *avapnoti*: takes, (tada : then), आशयात् *asayat* : from their seats, (the flowers), वायुः *vayuh* : wind, गन्धान् इव *gandhan iva* : like (taking) the scents, एतानि *etani* : these (six senses), गृहीत्वा *grihitva* : having taken, संयाति *samyati* : goes.

Substance : When the Lord (the *Jiva* who is Lord of the senses and the mind) obtains a body and when He leaves it, he takes these and goes (with them) as the wind takes the scents from their seats (the flowers).

Commentary : As the *Jiva* leaves one body and takes another, like one dropping old clothes and wearing new clothes, it is clear that he is not the body at all. Therefore this body-identification (*dehatma-buddhi*) should be given up once for all. 'I am *Atma*' is the *Mahamantra*.

More over, the word *Isvara* (Lord) is used with reference to *Jivatma*. The *Jiva* in truth, is the Lord of the senses, the mind, and the body and all that pertains to it. He is the master and not the slave and bondman as he is now thinking and behaving. What a fall is there-from the state of the supreme ruler to the humiliating state of a servant ! This is what has happened to man. He, the ruler, has no freedom or will of his own. He has to behave according to the dictates of the mind and the senses. He has reduced himself to this wretched position, by gross ignorance. "So, give up the slavery. Awake, arise and affirm your real nature ? Thou art *Paramatma* !" This is the trumpet call of Lord Krishna to all mankind.

Grihitvaitani samyati : It is said here that the *jiva* when he leaves one body and obtains another, takes the mind and the senses (the *vasanas*) with him. He cannot take any thing else with him, neither his house nor his relations and friends. They are all dropped off in the world. But what does he really take with him ? He takes the mind and the five senses in the form of (*vasanas*), tendencies and predispositions. These determine the nature of the next birth. If these are pure,

naturally the *jiva* is born to pure parents and enjoy a pure life. If these are impure, he is born to impure, and sinful wombs, may be, the wombs of beasts, birds or reptiles. So one's future life is in his own hands. He should therefore take to spiritual *sadhana* even now immediately and escape from the miserable fate of being born as beasts and reptiles hereafter.

These '*vasanas*' are the only provision for the journey of the *Jiva* to other worlds and bodies. Nothing else can he take from here. Nothing else can be of help to him. Nothing else follows him. They cannot even if they wish to. The journey is alone and lonely. But there is no fear, for, the good that he has done and the spiritual *sadhana* that he has performed will be with him. The mind carries the essence of his whole life, imbedded in it in subtle form. It is his body-guard in his journey. So people are themselves the makers of their future birth, good or bad or birthlessness. The last is the goal, for, it is the state of *Paramatma*. The wise attain it by Brahma Jnana.

Vayur gandhanivasayati : This simile is used to illustrate the idea of the *Jiva* carrying the mind and senses with him at the time of birth and death. The wind carries all kinds of scents sweet or foul, from all kinds of objects. From flowers, sweet fragrance, from flesh, foul odour, the wind carries by absorbing the subtle essence of those objects. The wind has no likes or dislikes towards these sweet and fould scents. As the message-bearer carries good and bad news, as the wind blows sweet or foul as the case may be the *jiva* carries this essence of his whole life, in the subtle form of '*vasanas*' and enters a new body. The body taken depends on the quality of the mind which the *jiva* is carrying. If it is impure, he goes into impure, wombs, if it is pure, he enters enlightened wombs. Therefore, there is no partiality for God or the Divinities of *Karma* in the transmigration of the *jiva*. If the mind becomes so pure as to be rid of all '*vasanas*', there is no further birth for the *jiva*. He attains union with *Paramatma* even here. So it is the primary duty of every seeker to purify the mind and the senses by constant *sadhana*. Thus they shall attain purer birth, and even Brahma jnana here and now.

यत् *yat* : when, शरीरं *sariram* : (another) body, अवाप्नोति *avapnoti*: takes, (tada : then), आशयात् *asayat* : from their seats, (the flowers), वायुः *vayuh* : wind, गन्धान् इव *gandhan iva* : like (taking) the scents, एतानि *etani* : these (six senses), गृहीत्वा *grihitva* : having taken, संयाति *samyati* : goes.

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Commentary : As the *Jiva* leaves one body and takes another, like one dropping old clothes and wearing new clothes, it is clear that he is not the body at all. Therefore this body-identification (*dehatma-buddhi*) should be given up once for all. 'I am *Atma*' is the *Mahamantra*.

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sense-world. He functions through them, and thus identifies himself with their changes and modifications. In truth, *Atma* is independent of the mind, body and the senses.

Question : *What are the instruments with which the jiva enjoys the objective world?*

Answer : With the organs of (1) ear, (2) eye, (3) touch, (4) taste, (5) smell and the mind, the sixth organ taking refuge in them, the *jiva* enjoys the sense world.

The deluded do not see the jiva (jivatma), only the wise see Him.

10. उत्क्रामन्तं स्थितं वापि भुञ्जानं वा गुणान्वितम् ।
विमूढा नानुपश्यन्ति पश्यन्ति ज्ञानचक्षुषः ॥ १०

Utkramantam sthitam va'pi bhunjanam va gunanvitam ।
vimudha na'nupasyanti pasyanti jnana chakshushah ॥ 10

Meaning : उत्क्रामन्तं *utkramantam* : departing from one body to another, वा *va* : or, स्थितं *Sthitam* : dwelling in the body, वा *va* : or, भुञ्जानम् *bhunjanam* : enjoying the sense-objects, गुणान्वितम् अपि *gunanvitam api* : even united with the Gunas (This Jivatma), विमूढाः *vimudhah* : the deluded, न अनुपश्यन्ति *na anupasyanti* : do not see, ज्ञानचक्षुषः *jnana chakshushah* : those who possess the eye of knowledge, पश्यन्ति *pasyanti* : see.

Substance : The *jivatma*, departing (from one body to another), or dwelling in the body, or enjoying the sense-world, united with the three *Gunas*, - is not seen by the deluded; those who possess the eye of knowledge behold (Him.)

Commentary : 'Why do we not see the Lord?' – This question is asked by many. The Lord answers it. 'You can see the Lord–now in the body by acquiring the eye of knowledge' One need not go far and search for Him here and there. In

his very body tenanted by the *jiva*, who is eating, drinking sleeping, acting, enjoying and suffering, that *Paramatman* can be seen by right discrimination which opens the eye of knowledge (*Jnanachakshushah*). On account of the domination of the objective phenomena, the deluded are not able to see Him. If he turns the mind outside, the world is reflected in it; if he turns it inside God is realised. If the mirror is turned to us, we see ourselves. If it is turned outside the world is seen. So also, when the mind is turned outside, the whole of the phenomenal world is seen. If the mind is turned within, kept calm, pure and firm, *Atma* is beheld. This *Atma* is seen only by such sages who can discriminate between the real and the unreal, the seer and the seen. (Seeing the *Atma* means, self - realisation.)

Utkramantam: The *jivatma* enjoys in one body and after discarding it takes up another and so on he migrates from body to body. It is clear that the seekers need to look into themselves to find the Lord there even in this body.

The first duty of man is to know who he is, what his true nature is, how he is dwelling in the body, and what he is doing with the sense-organs and the mind. This is the search for the Lord, through discrimination and dispassion. The externalised mind which is beholding any other thing except the seer, should turn its concentrated look at the seer Himself 'the Lord.' Thus the true nature of the real man within is known. Knowledge is the Light by which all things are seen clearly. The Lord is thus seen and realised with the eye of knowledge. The *Jiva* then knows that he is *Parmatma*, the Lord.

Question : *Who can see Paramatma, and who cannot ?*

Answer : Those who possess the eye of knowledge behold Him, the ignorant do not. (The eye of knowledge means right discrimination between *Atma* and *Anatma*.)

Without purity of heart, no effort can enable man to see Atma.

11. यतन्तो योगिनश्चैनं पश्यन्त्यात्मन्यवस्थितम् ।
यतन्तोऽप्यकृतात्मानो नैनं पश्यन्त्यचेतसः ॥ ११

Yatanto yoginas chai'nam pasyanty atmany avasthitam
yatanto' py akritatmano nai'nam pasyanty achetasah 11

Meaning : यतन्तः *yatantah :* striving (for self-realisation, Atma jnana), योगिनः *yoginah :* sages (yogis), आत्मनि *atmani :* in themselves, अवस्थितं *avasthitam :* dwelling, एनम् *enam :* this Atma, पश्यन्ति *pasyanti :* see (realise), यतन्तः अपि च *yatantah api cha :* and though striving, अकृतात्मानः *akritatmanah :* the impure (unrefined), अचेतसः *achetasah :* unintelligent, एनम् *enam :* this Atma, न पश्यन्ति *na pasyante :* do not see.

Substance : The sages striving (for *Atma jnana*), see this *Atma* dwelling in themselves; though striving, the impure and the unintelligent do not see the *Atma.*

Commentary : The Lord explains why some *yogis* are able to behold the *Atma,* whereas others fail in their efforts. The effort is common in both cases. Why should some succeed and others fail ? The impure-minded people (*akritatmah*) do not see the *Atma,* in spite of their *sadhana.* These also do *japa, dhyana* and other practices, but they fail because the heart is impure, (i. e. vitiated by powerful *vasanas* binding them to the external world). Some people attempt to realise *Atma* by a study of *sastras,* without eradicating the impurities of the heart. Some others carry on a show of external devotion and meditation. They do not possess real self-control, and so they fail in their search for *Paramatma.* We see here that the Lord insists on *purity* of heart as the essential condition for *Atmajnana.* If there is no *Purity,* there is no *Atmajnana.* When *Purity* is attained, *Atma* is realised. The path is clear.

The field should be cleared of rubbish, properly tilled and watered and then the seeds grow and the harvest is gathered. Otherwise the seeds are buried in the earth and have no chance of sprouting into life. They are wasted, for no harvest is gathered from that untilled, unwatered field (*kshetram*).

The four elementary principles of *sadhana* (*sadhana chatushtaya*) should be cultivated first, The heart is then

purified of its unholy desires, passions, and emotions. The bodily organs and the sense organs and the mind are brought under control. When these disturbing forces are kept under check, the mind is full of peace, and in that state, the enquiry into the Self continues without any hindrance and Self-realisation becomes easily possible.

The Lord makes it clear that two things are needed (1) Effort, (2) *Purity.* '*Yatantah*'-the *yogis* strive to discover the truth, *Atma.* The striving must be there for Self-realisation. Without it, nothing can be gained. But this striving should be accompanied with *Purity* (*Chitta-suddhi*). Then the reward is immediate. The word '*achetasah*' does not here refer to illiterate,ignorant men who have no idea of spiritual life at all. It refers to persons who have some ideas of spirituality, who believe in God, who have studied the *Sastras,* who understand the truth intellectually. These qualifications are good no doubt, but they are not enough for direct Self-realisation. They have to acquire self-control and dispassion (*vairagya*); otherwise, there is no progress. If the seekers do a bit of self-examination, they will find out how strong the bonds are which bind them to the objective world, and how weak their *vairagya* is. Let them concentrate on how to purify the heart of all its impure sensual tendencies. The company of the wise, the correct way of *Sadhana,* faith in the words of the Lord,—all these are necessary for the aspirant to reach the goal.

Question : *Where is Paramatma ?*

Answer : In one's own Self.

Question : *Who can see Him ?*

Answer : He who practices Sadhana, having purity can see Him.

Question : *Who cannot see Him s*

Answer : Those who strive without purity of heart (Chitta-suddhi) cannot see Him.

Question : *So, what are the conditions for God-realisation ?*

Answer : Purity and effort.

The excellence of Paramatma is described in four verses.

12. यदादित्यगतं तेजो जगद्भासयतेऽखिलम् ।
यच्चन्द्रमसि यच्चाग्नौ तत्तेजो विद्धि मामकम् ॥ १२

Yad adityagatam tejo jagad bhasayate'khilam ।
yacchandramasi yacch'gnau tat tejo viddhi mamakam । 12

Meaning : आदित्यगतं *adityagatam :* residing in the Sun, यत् तेजः *yat tejah :* which radiance (light and life), अखिलं *akhilam :* the whole, जगत् *jagat :* world, भासयते *bhasayate :* illuminess, चन्द्रमसि *chandramasi :* in the moon, यत् *yat :* which (radiance), अग्नौ च *agnau cha :* and in fire, यत् *yat :* which, तत् *tat :* that, तेजः *tejah :* light (all that radiance in the sun, moon and fire), मामकम् *mamakam :* (to be) mine, विद्धि *viddhi :* know.

Substance : Which radiance (light and life), residing in the sun, illumines the whole world; (which radiance) is in the moon, and in the fire, know (all) that light to be Mine.

Commentary : The Lord declares that the sun and the moon and the fire shine by His Light. They have borrowed His Light. Thus when we see the illumination of the various objects in the world, we should be filled with deep adoration for the Lord, whose glory is expressing itself in these mighty and spectacular manifestation.

Some elements have the power of illuminating others. The pot is not luminous; it shines by the reflected light of the sun. The tree is not luminous, it shines by the reflected light of the sun. The Sun, the Moon, and the Fire have the powers of light. They shine, and cause other objects to shine. But whence is the light of the Sun, the Moon and the Fire ? The Lord answers that it is His Light that is shining in the Sun, the Moon, and the Fire. *Paramatma* alone is the One Light, and that is reflected through different media like the Sun, the Moon and the Fire. This should be clearly under-stood by the aspirants *Paramatma* is Self-luminous; He is Light itself.

Question : *What is the nature of the Light residing in the Sun, the Moon, and the Fire ?*

Answer : It is the Light of Paramatma. It is the Divine Light of the Supreme Brahman.

The Lord declares that he enters the earth and nourishes the herbs and plants by His energy.

13. गामाविश्य च भूतानि धारयाम्यहमोजसा ।
पुष्णामि चौषधीः सर्वाः सोमो भूत्वा रसात्मकः ॥ १३

Gam avisya cha bhutani dharayamy aham ojasa ।
pusnami chau'sadhih sarvah somo bhutva rasatmakah । 13

Meaning : च *cha :* and, अहम् *Aham :* I, गाम् *gam :* the earth, आविश्य *avisya :* permeating, ओजसा *ojasa :* with (My) energy, भूतानि *bhutani :* (all) the beings (moving and non-moving), धारयामि *dharayami :* (I) support, रसात्मकः *rasatmakah :* the watery, सोमः *somah :* Moon, भूत्वा *bhutva :* having become, सर्वाः *sarvah :* all, ओषधीः *oshadhih :* herbs (Plants, corn etc.), पुष्णामि *pushnami :* (I) nourish.

Substance : And I, having peremeated the earth, sustain all beings with My energy; having become the watery moon, I nourish all herbs (plants and corn etc.).

Commentary : *Ojasa dharayami* : The energy that is any where exhibited by any being is derived from the Lord Himself. The whole world is sustained by His all-pervading energy (*sakti*). The ignorant may ascribe that energy to themselves, but the wise know that it is all the Lord's inexhaustible power exhibiting through the multitudinous beings of the universe. From this declaration of the Lord, we come to know that Sri Krishna, the Charioteer of Arjuna, is not simply the child of Devaki (a little '*upadhi*' like innumerable other beings), but the all-pervading, all-supporting *paramatma* More over, the food one eats is nourished by the Lord's energy, permeating the world. Without Him there would be no food for man. So when man feeds himself he should remember the Lord from whom the food has

come to him. He is the mightiest producer and also distributor. He is the giver of the food. Should we not be grateful to Lord ? Should we not offer to the Lord what belongs to Him ? Eating is not animal-activity, but divine work, if one knows the secret of the Lord's indivisible hand in its production. So also, if the light of the sun and the moon is not there, the universe would be plunged in darkness. It is the light of *Paramatma* that shines through the Sun, Moon and Fire. Man's life has become possible by the immeasurable energy (*sakti*) of the Lord. He is the supporter, the nourisher, and the dispensor. May people remember it always and remain steadfast in their love and devotion to Him.

Question : *How does the Lord help mankind?*

Answer : He permeates the earth and sustains all beings with His energy (sakti). He becomes the watery moon and nourishes the plants and herbs.

Question : *What then is the duty of man?*

Answer : He should remember the Lord in all the activities of life, by Japa, Dhyana, Samkirtan and worship.

The Lord declares that He is the digesting Fire in all living beings.

14 अहं वैश्वानरो भूत्वा प्राणिनां देहमाश्रितः ।
प्राणापानसमायुक्तः पचाम्यन्नं चतुर्विधम् ॥ १४

Aham vaisvanaro bhutva praninam deham asritah ।
pranapanasamayuktah pachamy annam chaturvidham ॥ 14

Meaning : अहम् *Aham* : I, वैश्वानरः *vaisvanarah* : the digestive fire (Jatharagni), भूत्वा *bhutva* : having become, प्राणिनाम् *praninam* : of beings, देहम् *deham* : the body, आश्रितः *asritah* : abiding in, प्राणापान समायुक्तः *pranapananamyuktah* : associated with the vital forces of Pana and Apana, चतुर्विध *chaturvidham* : four-fold, अन्नम् *annam* : food, पचामि *pachami* : (I) digest.

Substance : Abiding in the body of beings, having become the digestive fire (*jatharagni*) called '*vaisvanara*', I digest the four-fold food, associated with the vital forces of *Prana* and *Apana*.

Commentary : In the previous verse, the Lord said that He produces the food by his energy (*sakti*) and that He is the supporter and nourisher of all beings. Not only does the Lord produce food, He is also the digestive energy in all living beings. The body is built by food, and the food eaten should be properly digested before it turns into blood and vital energy. The digestive Fire (*Jatharagni*) is the Lord Himself in the form of *vaisvanara*. So the Lord is the Creator as well as the nourisher of the body. In this way man is wholly the product of the Lord and all the energy which he possesses comes to him from the Lord. He who eats the food without offering to the Lord is a thief, misappropriating to himself what is not really his (*yo bhunkte stena eva saha*. 3-12). That is why there is the *sadachara* in the world of offering food to God as *naivedyam* before eating. What is eaten without such offering is impure food. So every one should offer his food fist to God, and then a part of it to other hungry beings, and eat only the rest of it with Godly feelings. Then the very act of eating would become a *yajna*, and the food taken becomes nectar (*Amritam*).

Praninam deham asritah : The Lord is in the body, very near, nay, nearest to him. Realising His presence with him one should live a pure, blissful and blessed life.

Pachamyannam chaturvidham : The four-fold food (1) *Bhakshyam*-Food which has to be eaten by mastication, (2) *Bhojyam*-Soft food which has to be sucked in, (3) *Lehyam* that which has to licked, (4) *Choshyam* : that which has to be swallowed.

One can imagine how cautious he should be when he knows that the Lord is Himself the eater and the digester of food. Regulation of food-habits is a necessary pre-requisite of spiritual life. The body is the instrument of *yogasadhana*,

and food builds the body and sustains it. So every one should practice restraint and moderation in this matter. The following principles should be observed (1) He should not eat too much (2) *Sattvic* food alone should be taken, *Rajasic* and *Tamasic* food should be avoided (vide 17-8, 9, 10 verses for a definition of the Sattvic, *rajasic* and *tamasic*, types of food). (3) The food taken should first be effered to the Lord. (4) The food should be earned by righteous means.

It is certainly better to live on roots and leaves obtained by righteous means than on luxurious dishes got by cheating, stealth and other unrighteous (*adharmic*) ways. The Lord is observing from within every morsel that one eats. The law of moderation has already been enunciated by the Lord (*Yuktaharaviharasya* 6-17).

As the Chapter deals with food it has become a *sadachara* to recite it collectively or separately at the time of eating. In *Asramas*, Matts and houses, this pratice is followed by most people. Food eaten in this spirit is a real offering to the Lord. He accepts it. Besides, such food permeates every particle of the body with divine purity and energy. Generally after reciting this Discourse, the wise take water in their palm, repeat the 24th verse in the IV Chapter (*Brahmarpanam brahmahavir*—) sprinkle the water on the food, and then start eating. This is *Brahma Karma Samadhi*.

Question : *How does the Lord dwell in the body?*

Answer : In the form of Vaisvanara (Jatharagni).

Question : *What does He in that form?*

Answer : He digests the food, associated with the vital forces of Prana and Apana.

Question : *What then should men do?*

Answer : They should think of the Lord, offer the food to Him, and afterwards eat with pure and holy thoughts.

The Lord declares that He is present in the hearts of all beings.

15. सर्वस्य चाहं हृदि सन्निविष्टो
मत्तः स्मृतिर्ज्ञानमपोहनं च ।
वेदैश्च सर्वैरहमेव वेद्यो
वेदान्तकृद्वेदविदेव चाहम् ॥ १५

Sarvasya cha'ham hridi sannivisto
mattah smritir jnanam apohanam cha ।
vedais cha sarvair aham eva vedyo
vedantakrid vedavid eva cha'ham ॥ 15

Meaning: अहम् *aham* : I, सर्वस्य च *sarvasya cha* : of all beings, हृदि *hridi* : in the heart, सन्निविष्टः *sannivishtah* : dwell (am seated), मत्तः *mattah* : from Me, स्मृतिः *smritih* : memory, ज्ञानम् *jnanam* : knowledge, अपोहनं च *apohanam cha* : and forgetfulness, (bhavanti : occur), सर्वैः *sarvaih* : with all, वेदैः च *vedaih cha* : and the Vedas, वेद्यः *Vedyah* : to be known, *aham eva* : I alone, वेदान्तकृत् *vedantakrit* : the author of the Vedas. वेदवित् एव च *Vedavit eva cha* : and also the knower of the Vedas, अहं एव *aham eva* : I alone (am).

Substance : And I am seated in the hearts of all beings; from Me (arise) memory, knowledge and their absence; I am verily that which is to be known by all the *Vedas*; I am the author of the *Vedanta*; and verily I am the knower of the *Veda*.

Commentary : *Sarvasya* : Without distinction of caste, creed, religion, race and nationality, the Lord is present in the hearts of all beings. No one need feel desperate that he is devoid of the Lord's presence. The worst sinners and outcastes can ennoble their lives by giving up their evil ways, and feeling the presence of the Lord within themselves. Even the worst sinner can attain perfection, if he remembers that the background for him also is the mighty universal Lord, and he is one with Him.

Thus the Gita opens the door of the highest realisation to all beings. The Lord is the background, the source, and the foundation for all. What does it matter whether the wave is small or big, for, both is the same to the ocean. The small *Jiva* need not fear. The *Jiva* is part of the Lord Himself, in the same way as the wave is part of the ocean. The trumpet call of the Lord is 'I am in all, come to Me, I am yours.'

Hridi : He, the Lord, is seated in the hearts of all. He is the nearest to all. It is gross foolishness to imagine that the Lord is not with beings, or He is far away from them. Repeatedly does the Lord declare 'I am in the hearts of all', thus urging man to realise his divine nature and give up all thoughts of weakness, vileness and wretchedness. He is the witness of all that one does, and He is also the punisher, if he does wrong. So thinking, everyone should evolve towards higher planes of righteousness and perfection.

Smritir jnanam apoham : Memory, knowledge, loss of memory, all these are different forms of mental energy. The Lord is the foundation of the mind, and so all these mental states are caused by the Lord Himself. He is the observer of the subtlest mental processes and nothing can be hidden from Him. So, let every seeker be fully aware of the thoughts that are coming up in his mind, check them up, and entertain only those which are pure, uplifting, and inspiring.

Vedais cha sarvaih aham eva vedyah : The *Vedas* and the *Sastras* speak of different Gods and Goddesses, but the supreme Being to be known is *Paramatma*, the Lord only. This one supreme Being is manifesting as Brahma, Vishnu and Maheswara, Indra, Varuna, Yama and so on. The ultimate goal for all mankind is the one indivisible *Sachidananda Para Brahman*. All others are the manifestations of His wonderful Glory.

Vedantakrit : He is the author of *Vedanta*. The *Vedas* and the Upanishads are products of that One Divine intelligence. They are the words of *Paramatma*. Sincere seekers have to read them with faith and devotion. Such faith in the word of God is the only, way for spiritual progress and realisation. One's

faith in them should be firm and immovable. In tracing the line of *Gurus*, it is the *sadachara* to start with Narayana (*Paramatma*). ("OM Narayanam Padmabhuvam ... ...". He is the source of all knowledge from the highest to the lowest.

Question : *Where is Paramatma ?*

Answer : He is in the hearts of all beings.

Question : *From whom proceed memory, knowledge and their absence ?*

Answer : From Paramatma alone.

Question : *Who is the author of Vedanta ? Whom does the Vedas proclaim ? Who is the knower of the Vedas ?*

Answer : Paramatma alone.

The kshara and Akshara Purushas are described.

16. द्वाविमौ पुरुषौ लोके क्षरश्चाक्षर एव च ।
क्षरः सर्वाणि भूतानि कूटस्थोऽक्षर उच्यते ॥ १६

Dvav imau purusau loke ksharas cha'kshara eva cha
ksharah sarvani bhutani kutastho'kshara uchyate 16

Meaning : लोके *loke* : in the world, क्षरः च *ksharah cha* : the perishable, अक्षरः एव च *aksharah eva cha* : and also imperishable, द्वाविमौ पुरुषौ *dvavimau purushau* : these two Purushas (are), सर्वाणि भूतानि *sarvani bhutani* : the bodies of all beings, क्षरः *ksharah* : perishable Purusha, (uchyate : is said), कूटस्थः *kutasthah* : the imperishable Purusha, (remaining till Moksha) Jiva, अक्षरः *aksharah* : imperishable, उच्यते *uchyate* : is called.

Substance Two Purushas are there in the world, the perishable and the imperishable; all the bodies of beings are perishable and the *Jiva* (*Kutasthah*) is called the Imperishable.

Commentary : *Kshara Purusha*, *Akshara Purusha* and Purushothama–This Discourse deals with these three *Purushas*.

First the *Kshara Purusha* is explained. He who identifies himself with the physical body is *Kshara Purusha*. He who identifies himself with the mind is called *Akshara Purusha*. Compared with the body which perishes every time it is born, the mind, which endures birth after birth till the moment of liberation (*Moksha*), is said to be *Akshara* or *Kutasthah* (the immovable). This *Akshara Purusha* (*Manobhimani*) *Jiva* is not the same as the *Akshara Parabrahman* described in the 8th Discourse. These are poles apart. Brahman is the original Sun and the *Jiva* is the reflection of the Sun in water. The *Jiva* mentioned here is different from Brahman of the 8th discourse. In the coming verse the Lord describes *Purusha* who is different from *Kshara Purusha* and the *Akshara Purusha* (*Jiva*) who is the reflected consciousness of *Paramatma* in the body.

Question : *Who are the Purushas in the world ?*

Answer : They are two, the Kshara Purusha and the Akshara Purusha.

Question : *Who is the Kshara Purusha ?*

Answer : The bodies (upadhis) are said to be Kshara Purushas.

Question : *Who is the Akshara Purusha ?*

Answer : The Jiva

The Lord speaks of Purushottama.

17. उत्तमः पुरुषस्त्वन्यः परमात्मेत्युदाहृतः ।
यो लोकत्रयमाविश्य बिभर्त्यव्यय ईश्वरः ॥ १७

Uttamah purushas tvanyah paramatmetyudahritah ।
yo lokatrayam avisya bibhartyavyaya isvarah । 17

Meaning : यः *yah :* who, लोकत्रयम् *lokatrayam :* three worlds, आविश्य *avisya :* permeating, बिभर्ति *bibharti :* sustains, अव्ययः *avyayah :* imperishable, ईश्वरः *isvarah :* Lord (controller), अन्यः *anyah :* distinct (from the two above-mentioned Purushas), उत्तम पुरुषः *uttama purushah :* supreme Purusha, Purushottama, परमात्मा इति *paramatma iti :* as Paramatma, उदाहृतः *udahritah :* is called.

Substance : He who, permeating the three worlds, sustains them, who is different from the two *Purushas* (*Kshara* and *Akshara*), who is the Indestructible Lord (controller) of the universe, is called *Paramatma*, the Supreme *Purusha*.

Commentary : Different from the perishable bodies, and the *Jiva*, migrating from body to body, is the Supreme *Purusha*. He is distinct from the *Jiva*, who is only a reflected being of *Paramatma*. Is not the Supreme *Purusha* higher than the perishing bodies, and the *Jiva* bound by delusion to the vehicles of the body, senses and mind ? The Supreme *Purusha* is ever free (*nityamuktah*), whereas the *Jiva* attains *Mukti* by knowledge of the Supreme **Purusha**. The *Jiva* is associated with the three *Gunas*, but **Paramatma** is free from the *Gunas*; He is *Gunatita*. Therefore He is known as the Supreme *Purusha* or *Purushottama*.

Some people live in the state of the body (have *dehasthiti*), and some in the state of the *Jiva* (have *Jivasthiti*). He who lives in *Atma* alone is the Supreme *Purusha*. This is the goal to be attained by all with determined effort. The thoughtful man should not waste his life in the bound conditions of the *Jiva*. He should find his freedom and perfection. He should go beyond the body-state, the *Jiva*-state and realise the *Atmic* state (i. e.) the state of the Supreme *Purusha*. That is the end and aim of life. Nothing else can fulfil the true purpose of life.

Anyah : He is distinct from the body and mind. He is the witness (*sakshi*). The *Jiva* should realise that He is not affected by the modifications of the body and mind, and that he is the changeless imperishable *Atma*. This determined thought of his own *purity*, immutability, and immortality is to be cultivated, strengthened and confirmed till he comes to rest in *Atma*, apart from every thing else.

When one understands the nature and power of *Paramatma* his faith in Him would become firm and unshakable. Two attributes are mentioned here–(1) He is the supporter, the controller, and the Lord of the three worlds (2) He is indestructible. Having permeated the world, He is controlling all, the forces in the universe. When all the bodies (*upadhis*) and

the *Jiva* cease to exist, He shines alone eternally. The *Jiva* ceases to exist when he realises his true nature.

Question : *Is Paramatma distinct from Kshara and Akshara Purushas ?*

Answer : Yes. He is. He is the Supreme Purusha.

Question : *What is His nature ?*

Answer : (1) Having entered the three worlds, He sustains them. He is the Ruler of the Universe.

(2) He is indestructible.

Question : *What then is man's duty ?*

Answer : Transcending the Kshara and Akshara states, man should attain the plane of Purushottama.

Why Paramatma is known as Purushottama is explained.

18. यस्मात्क्षरमतीतोऽहमक्षरादपि चोत्तमः ।
अतोऽस्मि लोके वेदे च प्रथितः पुरुषोत्तमः ॥ १८

Yasmat ksharam atito'ham aksharad api cho'ttamah ।
ato'smi loke vede cha prathitah purushottamah ॥ 18

Meaning : यस्मात् *yasmat :* as, अहं *aham :* I, क्षरं *ksharam :* the perishable Purusha, अतीतः *atitah :* transcend, अक्षरात् अपि *aksharat api :* to the imperishable purusha also, उत्तमः च *uttamah cha :* superior also, अतः *atah :* for that reason, लोके *loke :* in the world, वेदे च *vede cha :* in the Vedas also, पुरुषोत्तमः *Purushottamah :* the higher Purusha, प्रथितः *prathitah :* declared, अस्मि *asmi :* I am.

Substance : As I transcend the perishable and am higher than the imperishable (*Jiva*), for that reason, I am declared as the highest *Purusha* in the world and in the *Vedas*.

Commentary : *Paramatma* is called the Highest *Purusha*, because he transcends the perishable body and the imperishable *Jiva*. The *Jiva* should go beyond his limited *Jivatvam*–imprisonment

in the cell of the body and mind–vehicles and attain his true nature as the Highest *Purusha*. In truth, *Jivatvam* is an illusion. The *Jiva* is no other than the Supreme *Purusha*.

Question : *Why is Paramatma declared to be the highest purusha?*

Answer : Because He is higher than the perishable body (Kshara) and the Jiva (Aksharam).

He who knows Paramatma to be the Highest Purusha worships Him with pure devotion.

19. यो मामेवमसंमूढो जानाति पुरुषोत्तमम् ।
स सर्वविद्भजति मां सर्वभावेन भारत ॥ १९

Yo mam evam asammudho janati purusottamam ।
sa sarvavid bhajati mam sarva bhavena bharata ॥ 19

Meaning : भारत *bharata :* O Arjuna! यः *yah :* who, असंमूढः *asammudhah :* freed of delusion, एवम् *evam :* thus, माम् *mam :* me, पुरुषोत्तमम् *purushottamam :* the highest purusha, जानाति *janati :* knows, सः *sah :* he, सर्ववित् *sarvavit :* all–knowing, सर्वभावेन *sarvabhavena :* with his whole being (heart) in every way, माम् *mam :* me, भजति *bhajati :* worships.

Substance : O Arjuna! He, who freed from delusion knows Me thus as the Highest *Purusha*, is the all–knowing; He whorships Me with his whole being.

Commentary : One's devotion to a person or thing is formed by his understanding of his true nature to some extent. The more he knows the excellence of a person, the more he loves him and the more he is devoted to him. Thus if a person knows the true nature of *Paramatma*, his devotion would be real and immovable. The Lord is Eternal, the essence of all bliss and blessedness. He is higher than the perishable body and the imprisoned *Jiva*. He is freedom and He is perfection. Such is the Supreme *Purusha*. It is declared here that he who knows the Lord as such, would worship Him with his whole being.

Asammudhah: He should be free from delusion. Ignorance is nothing else but the feeling of attachment to perishable things. Understanding of *Atma* as the only Eternal Reality is Knowledge.

Sah sarvavit: He who understands the Supreme *Purusha* is declared to be all-knowing. He is the knower of all. *Brahma-jnana* alone is complete knowledge. Knowledge of all other things does not confer perfection of knowledge on man.

Knowledge of *Paramatma* brings with it knowledge of every thing in the world. *Paramatma* being known, every thing is known. All the sciences and arts, all the *Sastras* and the *Vedas*, are in Him. So to know Him is to know all. Such a man becomes all-knowing ('*sarvavit*').

Sarvabhavena: As one realises the true nature of *Paramatma*, his faith in Him becomes strong and firm. Then he worships Him in every way, with all his heart and soul. When it is clearly seen that the objective world is every moment a vanishing dream, one naturally turns to the only reality, the *Drik* (seer) *Atma*. The whole-hearted and undivided worship of the Lord is emphasised here, and in many places too (Vide 18-62 *tameva saranam gaccha sarva bhavena bharata*). The mind should not split into two channels-God and the world, because where the world rules, God is far away, and where God rules the heart, the world is far away. It would be utterly foolish to imagine that one can attain *Atma*, while every moment he is oppressed by the demands of the flesh and the desires of the mind. The seeker should have perfect mental non-attachment to the world and think of the Lord only. This fulness of devotion, the hundred percent concentration on the Lord, should be acquired by long practice and ceaseless effort.

Question: *Who worships the Lord with the whole-heart?*

Answer : He who is freed from delusion, and understands that the supreme Purusha is higher than the Kshara and Akshara Purushas, worships him with heart and soul.

Question: *How should the Lord be worshipped?*

Answer : With a full and undivided mind (Sarvabavena).

The fruit of understanding this Discourse is stated.

20. इति गुह्यतमं शास्त्रमिदमुक्तं मयाऽनघ ।
एतद्बुद्ध्वा बुद्धिमान्स्यात्कृतकृत्यश्च भारत ॥ २०

Iti guhyatamam sastram idam uktam maya'nagha ।
etad buddhva buddhiman syat kritakrityas cha bharata ॥ 20

Meaning: अनघ *anagha*: O sinless Arjuna! इति *iti*: thus, गुह्यतमम् *guhyatamam:* greatest secret, इदं *idam*: this, शास्त्रम् *sastram:* Sastram, मया *maya*: by me, उक्तं *uktam*: is said, भारत *bharata*: O Arjuna! एतत् *etat*: this, बुध्वा *buddhva*: knowing (man), बुद्धिमान् *buddhiman*: wise, कृतकृत्यः च *kritakrityah cha*: and of accomplished duties, स्यात् *syat*: becomes.

Substance: O Sinless Arjuna! Thus I have declared unto you this most secret *Sastra*; he who understands it well, becomes wise and has accomplished all his duties.

Commentary: The Lord declares the fruit of understanding the Supreme *Purusha* as distinguished from the *Kshara* and *Akshara*. He says that this *Sastra*, science taught by Him is the greatest secret (*guhyatamam*). The superlative form is used to show that this truth is the highest secret, greatest mystery to be known by man. Generally no wise man reveals any thing to a fool or a braggart. He selects his hearer by knowing his nature and character. Then only he reveals the secret. Here also the Lord has chosen Arjuna to be the recipient of this divine knowledge, because he is sinless (*anagha*). It is stated as a rule that *Brahmavidya* is not taught to persons who are devoid of the essential qualities of self-control. The seeker should first acquire of mental purity (*chittasuddhi*) and then he gets the qualification (*adhikara*) to be initiated into the highest secret. If any one like Arjuna, becomes sinless by devotion, austerity, '*dhyana*' and other practices, he is certain to obtain the Highest Knowledge

from some great-souled teacher (*Guru*) or by some incidental factor in his life. Or the Lord Himself confers the subtlety of the intellect capable of perceiving the truth (*dadami buddhi yogam tam*).

What is the fruit of acquiring this knowledge? He becomes (1) wise (having Self-knowledge), (2) he has accomplished all his duties. The performance of all other works in the world do not lead man to the highest state of perfection and freedom. All other works may confer merit (*Punyam*) by which one enjoys fruits of good life in other worlds. But still liberation is not attained. He has to be born again and again. When *Brahma Jnana* is attained, he receives the merit of having accomplished all his duties, and has no further work to do with the body in this or in any other world. Therefore it is the duty of all seekers to rise to this plane of liberation and realise the fulness of bliss and blessedness. Without it the cycle of birth and death continues and sorrow envelops them endlessly.

Question : *What is the nature of this spiritual knowledge taught by the Lord?*

Answer : It is the greatest secret and the highest mystery.

Question : *Why did the Lord teach it to Arjuna?*

Answer : Because Arjuna is free from sin.

Question : *What is the fruit of acquiring this knowledge?*

Answer : Man becomes (1) wise and (2) has accomplished all his duties.

Question : *What then is the way to become wise and of fulfilled purpose?*

Answer : To understand this secret knowledge is the way.

इति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे
श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे पुरुषोत्तमप्राप्तियोगो नाम
पञ्चदशोऽध्यायः ॥

Iti Srimad Bhagavadgitasupanishatsu brahmavidyayam yogasastre Sri Krishnarjuna samvade Purusottamaprapti yogo nama panchadaso'dhyayah ॥

Thus, in the glorious Upanishads of the Bhagavad Gita, in the Science of the Eternal, in the scripture of Yoga, in the dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna ends the Fifteenth Discourse entitled
Purushottamaprapti Yoga

(The Yoga of the attainment of the Supreme Purusha.)

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श्री भगवद्गीता

SRI BHAGAVAD GITA

अथ षोडशोऽध्यायः

Atha shodasodhyayah

SIXTEENTH DISCOURSE

दैवासुरसंपद्विभाग योगः

DAIVASURASAMPADVIBHAGA YOGA

THE YOGA OF THE DIVISION BETWEEN THE DIVINE AND THE DEMONICAL

I. Title of the Discourse :

Sampada means treasure. Divine Treasure (*daivi sampada*) would mean the possession of divine qualities, a mass of sacred virtues. It is character equipment drawing the man towards God. Opposed to this is '*asurasampada*', undivine or demonical qualities and character which draw man away from God. In this Discourse the Lord explains the two natures–the Divine and the Demonical–very vividly. The seeker will then be in a position to examine himself and find out what his real nature is. If it is good, he should strengthen it and make himself purer still, and move forward to reach God. If his nature is blackened by undivine forces, he should try to clear them away from his mind and body. So this Discourse is of great importance for all seekers on the spiritual path. As it deals with the Divine and Demonical nature, it is entitled "*Daivasurasampadvibhaga yoga.*"

II. Important points of the Discourse :

1) The qualities of Divine nature (1–3)
2) The qualities of Demonical nature (4)
3) The fruit of the two opposed natures (5)
4) The qualities of man of demonical nature and the destruction that comes to them. (6–29)
5) The gateways to Hell. (21)
6) The laws of the *Sastras*, the violation of the *Sastric* laws and the Lord's instruction to accept the *Sastras*. (22–24)

III. How this Discourse is connected with the previous one :

In the 7th and the 9th Discourses, the Lord has already referred to people of evil and demonical natures, who fail to understand Him, who deny Him even.

(*na mam dushkritino mudhah* 15 – 7)
(*avajananti mam mudhah* 11 – 9)
(*moghaso moghakarmano* 12 – 9)

Soon after, the Lord again refers to the good souls who think of Him and worship Him with faith and devotion.

(*mahatmanastu mam partha* 13 – 9)
(*satatam kirtayanto mam* 14 – 9)

Naturally a fuller explanation of the two hostile forces would be helpful to His disciple. So the Lord elaborately describes the man of Divine Qualities and the man of Demonical qualities. Moreover from the '*Purushottama prapti yoga*,' it is clear that the possession of divine qualities is absolutely essential to realise the Supreme *Purusha*. What are the qualities to adopt and what are the qualities to be abandoned, – these questions are of immediate concern for all seekers. Hence the Lord presents a vivid picture of the two types of beings. He starts first with the qualities of Divine nature.

श्री भगवानुवाच

1. अभयं सत्त्वसंशुद्धिर्ज्ञानयोगव्यवस्थितिः ।
दानं दमश्च यज्ञश्च स्वाध्यायस्तप आर्जवम् ॥ १

2. अहिंसा सत्यमक्रोधस्त्यागः शान्तिरपैशुनम् ।
दया भूतेष्वलोलत्वं मार्दवं ह्रीरचापलम् ॥ २

3. तेजः क्षमा धृतिः शौचमद्रोहो नातिमानिता ।
भवन्ति संपदं दैवीमभिजातस्य भारत ॥ ३

Sri Bhagavan uvacha

Abhayam sattvasamsuddhir jnanayoga vyavasthitih ।
danam damas cha yajnas cha svadhyayastapa arjavam ॥ 1

Ahimsa satyam akrodhas tyagah santir apaisunam ।
daya bhutesva lolatvam mardavam hrirachapalam ॥ 2

Tejah kshama dhritih saucham adroho na'timanita ।
bhavanti sampadam daivim abhijatasya bharata ॥

श्री भगवानुवाच *Sri Bhagavan Uvacha* **: The blessed Lord said.**

Meaning: भारत *bharata :* O Arjuna! अभयं *abhayam* : fearlessness, सत्त्वसंशुद्धिः *sattva samsuddhih :* purity of mind, ज्ञान योग व्यवस्थितिः *jnana yoga vyavasthitah :* steadfastness in knowledge and yoga, दानं *danam :* charity, दमः च *damah cha :* control of external organs, यज्ञः च *yajnah cha :* and (jnana) yajna, स्वाध्यायः *svadhyayah :* study of Vedas and the Sastras, तपः *tapah :* austerity, आर्जवम् *arjavam :* integrity, अहिंसा *ahimsa :* non-injury, सत्यं *satyam :* truthfulness (taking refuge in Paramatma), अक्रोधः *akrodhah :* freedom from hatred, त्यागः *tyagah :* sacrifice, शान्तिः *santih :* peace, अपैशुनम् *apisaunam :* absence of crookedness, दया भूतेषु *daya bhuteshu :* kindness towards beings, अलोलत्वं *alolatvam :* absence of desire for enjoymet, मार्दवम् *mardavam :* gentleness. ह्रीः *hrih :* modesty, अचापलम् *achaupalam:* absence of fickleness, तेजः *tejah :*

brightnesss (light of Brahman), क्षमा *kshama :* forgiveness, धृतिः *dhritih :* fortitude, शौचम् *saucham :* purity, अद्रोहः *adrohah :* absence of hatred, नातिमानिता *natimanita :* not over-pride (that he is fit to be revered or worshipped), दैवीम् *daivim :* to Divine, सम्पदम् *sampadam :* state, अभिजातस्य *abhi jatasya :* of the born, भवन्ति *bhavanti :* belong.

Substance : The Blessed Lord said : Fearlessness, purity of heart, steadfastness in knowledge and *yoga*, alms-giving, control of the senses, sacrifice, study of the *Sastras*, austerity and straight-forwardness,

Harmlessness, truth, absence of anger, renunciation, peacefulness, absence of crookedness, compassion to beings, absence of greed, gentleness, modesty, absence of fickleness,

Energy, forgiveness, fortitude, purity, absence of hatred, absence of over-pride, (these qualities) belong to one born of a divine state.

Commentary: The *Gita* gives prominence to practise (*sadhana*). The spiritual goal is very near when the mind is purified. So the manner and means of purifying the mind are clearly stated in many places and here, '*daivisampat*' is particularly intended to teach the disciple the science of self-purification. Twenty six qualities are mentioned here. The aspirant for *Moksha* like the good student at his desk, should cultivate those qualities with determination and assiduous practice (*abhyasa*). He should not only acquire them but protect them as one would protect a treasure safely, never allowing anything to drop away from it.

Daivisampat is divine wealth, and the Lord scatters it among the people at large and says, "O ye mortals ! Do not set your heart in worldly treasures, do not get entangled in the meshes of sense-enjoyments, for they shall cause misery birth after birth. Here are the precious jewels of spiritual illumination. Take them, take them all, for they are yours, and you

shall be truly rich and wealthy when you possess them." Therefore the wise and the thoughtful should quickly take hold of the treasure, and with the knowledge-treasure attain oneness with *Paramatma* !

Abhayam : Among all the virtues, the Lord first takes up what may be described as the 'lion' among good qualities-fearlessness (*abhayam*). One should pause and think why fearlessness is given the first place among a number of other virtues equally great and adorable. (1) Fear is the source of all evil, and from fear arises all other bad qualities. Men cheat, betray, fight, kill, dominate, suppress truth, and do every evil thing, out of fear. All weakness is caused by fear. Man suffers misery by fear. Men clings to this life, wife and children, houses and positions on account of fear. The whole Samsara is built on fear. So if this fear is eradicated all other evil and weakness, disappear gradually. Fearlessness will bring with it all the other shining virtues which lead to liberation. So it is the virtue of 'daivisampat'. In the game of Tug-of-war, the first man and the last man are selected for their strength and weight. In this tug-of-war with the evil forces, fearlessness is chosen as the captain to lead the team of virtues on the battle-field of everybody's heart. The Upanishads declare that '*abhayam*, is the state of Brahman.

Abhayam vai Janaka praptosi.

Thus, Abbayam, the first virtue declared by the Lord should be practised by every seeker for spiritual realisation.

Sattvasamsuddhih : Perfect purity of the mind is stated next. The mind should be as pure as the purest mirror. Not a speck of dust should be there. Not a trace of worldly thoughts, sensual tendencies, vicious inclinations should be there. As the mind gets pure, the Atmic light is clearly perceived in it. True knowledge and joy fills the mind.

Jnanayogavyavasthitah : Though different *yogas* are taught in the Gita, here and there the superior excellence of *jnanayoga* is mentioned as *Atmajnana* is the goal of sparitual life.

(Sarvam karmakhilam Partha jnane parisamapyate.) All works and *yogas* culminate in *jnana*. Therefore the Lord mentions it in the beginning, and the seekers should take to knowledge and cross over delusion and ignorance.

Danam : Charity which includes every kind of help offered to others without expectation of any return from them. Gift of lands, money, food, water service, education, knowledge, all offerings come under, 'danam.'

Damah : The control of the internal organs is included in '*Sattva samsuddhih*', and so here the control of external organs is mentioned. Self-restraint both internal and external is the pre-requisite of all spiritual progress. Proper emphasis is given to these virtues in the Gita.

Yajnah : Tapo-yajna, yoga-yajna, svadhyaya-yajna, jnana-yajna—these are the yajnas most necessary for spiritual life.

Svadhyayah : The study of the Gita, Upanishads, Brahmasutras, Yoga-Vasishta, Bharata, Bhagavata, Ramayana, etc. and books of this type should be read and their essense absorbed through deep thought and meditation. This is Svadhyaya.

Tapah : This is explained in the 17th Discourse. It is absolute purity in word, thought and deed and not the mortification of the flesh.

Arjavam : Straight-forwardness in thought, word and deed. This is called 'Trikaranasuddhi,'—because thinking, speaking and acting form the triple function of all men. Where there is harmony among the three, there is truth. Poisonous reptiles are crooked in their movements, and hence if man is crooked in his character, he is like a reptile.

Ahimsa : Non-injury towards any creature in thought, word or deed.

Satyam : (1) Truth in thought word and deed,

(2) Adherence in *Atma*, the One Reality.

Akrodhah : Absence of anger. *Krodha* is man's deadly foe in every way. Obsessed by it man loses all discrimination and destroys himself by cruel beaviour towards elders and *Gurus*. So the Lord has already warned man against it (*Krodhat bhavati sammohah*). Under its power man is transformed into a demon, horrible to look at, with red eyes, sweating, shaking, abusing and attacking. Freedom from this Demon is therefore the primary duty of man in his life, both secular and spiritual.

Tyagah : *Tyagenaike amritatva manasuh*–By *Tyaga* alone, *Moksha* is attained–so says the Upanishads. Taking refuge in *Paramatma* by giving up attachment for objects is *tyaga*. Giving up evil thoughts, evil actions, evil ways of life, is *tyaga*. Renunciation of all desires for enjoyments is *tyaga* Surrendering all the fruits of actions to God is *tyaga*. Internal renunciation is of more significance than formal external renunciation.

Santih : Peace, calmness of mind. The mind should be like a waveless lake and not like a turbulent ocean. Perfect peace is attained only when the mind merges in *Atma*. Where there is no peace there is no happiness (*asantasya kutah sukham*). Taking refuge in God and giving up desires is the way to peace.

Apaisunam : Not pointing out bad qualities in others, not carrying tales against others. Why should one concern with the evil of others ? It is enough if he cleanses his own heart filled with innumerable evils.

Daya bhuteshu : Kindness and compassion towards all beings is mentioned several times in the Gita. *Brahmajnana* is most closely associated with universal compassion. The seekers should cultivate this virtue along with *Bhakti*, *Jnana* and *Vairagya*.

Alolatvam : Indulgence in several pleasures should be abandoned completely. The sense-organs lose their power by yielding to the temptations of the flesh and are incapaciated to think and grasp higher truths. So they should be withdrawn from sense-objects (*pratyahara*) and established in *Atma*. The mind should not waver from the chosen ideal.

Mardavam : Gentleness in word and deed. Hardness and harshness should be abandoned. This is the attitude of a man of Sattvic nature.

Hrih : This is the mark of an evolved human being. (1) He is ashamed of himself if he does anything wrong, when he utters a lie, or when he injures another, or when he acts contrary to Sastraic injunctions. (2) The seeker should question himself about his spiritual progress, and when he has not made proper advance, he should feel ashamed of his niggardly and sluggish attempts in securing his own good. (3) When one comes across great men of purity and perfection, experienced in *Brahmajnana*, he should feel ashamed of himself, and strive for perfection like them.

Achapalam : The wandering mind should be brought to rest in *Atma*.

Tejah : The light of *Brahman*.

Kshama : Forbearance, forgiveness. One should think of God-men like Suka and their exceptional forbearance and love for all. When the pairs of opposites overtake him he should remain firm and unmoved.

Dhritih : The seekers should be steadfast and firm. As man thinks of the unreality of the world and the blessedness of *Paramatma*, he becomes bold and firm in all the functions of his life. Like the Meru mountain he should be immovable under the most difficult circumstances.

Saucham : (1) External purity of the person, house etc. (2) Internal purity of the senses and the mind, and freedom from bad thoughts and feelings.

Adrohah : Abandoning hatred and betrayal of others.

Natimanita : One should not be proud and imagine that he should be adored and worshipped by others. This is a very important point for all seekers to remember. Lacking in this, many advancing souls in spiritual life have fallen down before attaining Self-realisation.

One should think of Hanuman, his humility and devotion, his egolessness, his utter self-surrender to Rama. Such a man alone can achieve the Highest.

Thus *Daivisampat* includes twenty six virtues. These should be cultivated carefully and assiduously by all people who wish to advance in spiritual life.

Question : *How many and what are the qualities of Daivisampat?*

Answre : They are twenty six–1) Fearlessness, 2) purity of heart, 3) steadfastness in knowledge and *yoga*, 4) alms-giving, 5) control of the senses, 6) sacrifice, 7) study of the *Sastras*, 8) austerity, 9) straightforwardness, 10) harmlessness, 11) truth, 12) absence of anger, 13) renunciation, 14) peacefulness, 15) absence of crookedness, 16) compassion to beings, 17) absence of greed, 18) gentleness, 19) modesty, 20) absence of fickleness, 21) energy, 22) forgiveness, 23) fortitude, 24) purity, 25) absence of hatred, 26) absence of pride—these are the qualities born of a divine state.

Now Asurasampat is explained.

4. दम्भो दर्पोऽभिमानश्च क्रोधः पारुष्यमेव च ।
अज्ञानं चाभिजातस्य पार्थ संपदमासुरीम् ॥ ४

Dambho darpo'bhimanas cha krodhah parushyam eva cha ।
ajnanam cha'bhijatasya partha sampadam asurim ॥ 4

Meaning : पार्थ *partha :* O Arjuna ! दम्भः *dambhah :* pretension (of greatness, holiness etc.), दर्पः *darpah :* pride, arrogance, अभिमानः च *abhimanah cha :* and self-conceit, क्रोधः *krodhah :* wrath, पारुष्यं एव च *parushyam eva cha :* and also harshness, अज्ञानम् च *ajnanam cha :* and ignorance, आसुरीम् *asurim :* demonical, सम्पदम् *sampadam :* state, अभिजातस्य *abhijatasya :* of the born.

Substance : O Arjuna ! Pretension, pride, self-conceit, anger, harshness, and ignorance belong to those who are born with demonical nature.

Commentary : The wise value the good qualities described as *Daivisampat* and try to cultivate them in their life. Opposed to this, men of demonical nature embrace the wicked qualities mentioned in this verse. That is why they are spoken of as *Asurasampat*. Really speaking, the demoncial state is not *sampat* (treasure) at all. And yet people are so deluded that they hug these wicked qualities and think of themselves as great men. The Lord mentions six qualities of the demonical nature. They are elaborately discussed in this discourse. In the great war with *Maya*, it is necessary to know and understand the power of the enemy forces as well as the forces of one's own. Only then it would be possible to wage a successful war with the enemy. If anybody wants to live in a house, he should first of all clean it of the dust, cobwebs and other foul things, and then light some scented sticks to purify the atmosphere. So also, man should keep the body pure, the foul things in it should be ejected and nourishing food should be taken in. In the same manner, purity of mind should be cultivated by abandoning the bad qualities which have been possessing the heart for a long time in one's ignorant state. The removal of vicious taints from nature and the formation of healthy patterns of character and conduct, is the duty of all men.

Dambhah : Pretension is mentioned as the captain of the enemy forces (*Asurasampat*). The inclination to appear bigger and greater than what one is, is natural to all common people. This tendency should be checked completely as it stands directly in the way of the seeker, whose aim is to know the real Self, and not masquerade under a false garb. Such pretension may cheat the world but not *Paramatma*, who is ever present in the heart and observing every movement of the mind and the body. So this demonical quality should be eradicated. If honour and position should come to any one, he should consider it to be the grace of God, and remain humble. Besides this, *Krodha* (wrath) should be abandoned completely. The man of Divine nature

is free from wrath. He should be gentle in word and deed. Starting with *Dambha* the *asuric* nature ends with ignorance *ajnana*, as the last. Out of ignorance grows the demonical nature with all its evil qualities.

Question : *What are the qualities of the Demonical nature ?*

Answer : They are six—1) Pretension, 2) pride, 3) self-conceit, 4) hatred, 5) harshness, 6) ignorance.

Question : *How should one deal with these ?*

Answer : They should be rejected and totally eradicated from the mind.

Divine Nature leads to liberation (Moksha) and the demonical leads to bondage.

5. दैवी संपद्विमोक्षाय निबन्धायासुरी मता ।
मा शुचः संपदं दैवीमभिजातोऽसि पाण्डव ॥ ५

Daivi sampad vimokshaya nibandhaya'suri mata ।
ma suchah sampadam daivim abhijato'si pandava ॥ 5

Meaning : दैवीसंपत् *daivisampat :* divine nature, विमोक्षाय *vimokshaya :* for liberation, (Moksha), आसुरी *asuri (sampat) :* demonical nature, निबन्धाय *nibandhaya :* for bondage, मता *mata :* determined, (as cause), पाण्डव *pandava :* O Arjuna ! (tvam : you), दैवीं संपदम् *daivim sampadam :* for the divine nature, अभिजातः असि *abhijatah asi :* are born, मा शुचः *ma suchah :* do not grieve.

Substance : The Divine nature is deemed for liberation (from *samsara*). O Arjuna ! you are born for the divine nature, and so do not grieve.

Commentary : Having described the divine and demonical nature, the Lord now declares the fruits of each. When a man knows the effects of the things, he is induced to accept things, which yield good results and abandon others which yield bad results. Divine nature leads to liberation, the demonical leads

to bondage. The two natures function in opposite directions, and yield opposite results. One liberates and the other binds, enslaves. The thoughtful know what to choose, between freedom and slavery. No one wants pain and suffering, ignorance and darkness, slavery and bondage. Therefore it is our duty to dispel darkness with light, to remove ignorance with knowledge, and to crush demonical nature with divine.

These two hostile natures, the divine and the demonical are not recial or national or family qualities. After a man is born, these two natures develop gradually in him. By right type of control, guidance and training, the mind falls into the groove of divine qualities, and then it attains the highest rewards of self-realisation. On the other hand, if the mind falls into the wrong groove, it acquires all evil qualities and the man falls into lower planes of life. Arjuna is assured by the Lord Himself, that he is born for divine nature and full of divine qualities. Otherwise how could he receive the supreme truth directly from the lips of the Lord Himself ?

Ma suchah : 'Do not grieve.' This is the Gita message, simple, straight, direct and decisive. "O Arjuna ! you are born for the divine nature and therefore, do not grieve.". From this it is clear that the cultivation of good qualities, purity of mind, is the way to peace and bliss. It is also clear that the demonical nature is the cause of sorrow, misery and death. Therefore the aspirants for spiritual light should strive for divine nature and resolutely abandon the demonical impulses.

The stronger terms *vimokshaya* and *nibandhaya* are used here to suggest that the Divine liberates completely and the Demonical binds fast.

Question : *What is the fruit of Daivisampat ?*

Answer : 'Moksha' – liberation.

Question : *What is the effect of Asurasampat ?*

Answer : Bondage.

Question : *What is the path to Moksha ?*

Answer : 'Daivi sampat' : Practice of the good qualities, mentioned in 1 to 3 verses.

Question : *By what is bondage (sorrow) caused ?*

Answer : By the demonical nature.

Question : *What is the nature of Arjuna ?*

Answer : He is born for the Divine nature.

Question : *Who can conquer sorrow in the world ?*

Answer : The man who possesses Divine nature.

Men are divided into two types, of the Divine and the Demonical natures.

6. द्वौ भूतसर्गौ लोकेऽस्मिन् दैव आसुर एव च।
दैवो विस्तरशः प्रोक्त आसुरं पार्थ मे शृणु ॥ ६

Dvau bhutasargau loke'smin daiva asura eva cha ।
daivo vistarasah prokta asuram partha me srinu ॥ 6

Meaning : पार्थ *partha :* O Arjuna ! अस्मिन् लोके *asmin loke :* in this world, दैवः *daivah :* Divine, आसुरः एव च *asurah eva cha :* and also Demonical, द्वौ *dvau :* two kinds of, भूतसर्गौ *bhuta sargau :* creation of beings (are), दैवः *daivah :* Divine, विस्तरशः *vistarasah :* extensively, प्रोक्तः *proktah :* is said, आसुरं *asuram :* (now) the demonical, मे *me :* from Me, शृणु *srinu :* hear.

Substance : O Arjuna ! There are two kinds of beings created in the world, the Divine and the Demonical. Of these, the Divine is said extensively. Now hear from me about the Demonical.

Commentary : From this, we understand that there are only two races of beings, 1) the Divine, 2) and the Demonical. The Aryans and non Aryans are divided distinctly by the qualities, which they exhibit. All other distinctions of races and creeds are subsequent divisions brought about by men, by geographical and other external considerations. Whatever may be the birth of man, the field of the Divine is open for all to

enter by the practice of the blessed qualities described by the Lord in *daivisampat.*

In twelve verses, the Lord explains the Demonical nature in detail.

7. प्रवृत्तिं च निवृत्तिं च जना न विदुरासुराः।
न शौचं नापि चाचारो न सत्यं तेषु विद्यते ॥ ७

Pravrittim cha nivrittim cha jana na vidur asurah ।
na saucham na'pi cha'charo na satyam teshu vidyate ॥ 7

Meaning : आसुराः *asurah :* demonical nature, जनाः *janah :* people (of), प्रवृत्तिं च *pravrittim cha :* either righteous action, निवृत्तिं च *nivrittim cha :* or freedom from unrighteous, न विदुः *na viduh :* do not know, तेषु *teshu,* in them, शौचम् *saucham :* purity, न विद्यते *na vidyate :* is not, आचारः च *acharah cha :* and right conduct, न *na :* is not, सत्यं अपि *satyam api :* also truth, न *na :* is not.

Substance : People of demonical nature do not know righteous conduct or freedom from unrighteous action. They do not have either purity, or good conduct or truth.

Commentary : People of the demonical nature do not know what is right action, and do not refrain from the wrong way of life. Even if they are advised, they do not heed the advice. These are the worst type of men. The middle type listen to advice and try to refrain themselves. The highest type are already on the Divine path. Here two words *Pravritti* and *Nivritti* are used. *Pravritti* means what should be done and *Nivritti* means what should not be done. The wise man should know both. He knows that the Divine nature is the way to the highest goal and the demonical leads to destruction. Even this is not known to people of the Asuric type.

Question : *What is the nature of the Asuric type of people ?*

Answer : They do not know what is the virtuous(Dharmic)way of life and how to refrain from evil (Adharmic) action. They have no purity, no good conduct, no truth.

8. असत्यमप्रतिष्ठं ते जगदाहुरनीश्वरम् ।
अपरस्परसंभूतं किमन्यत्कामहैतुकम् ॥ ८

Asatyam apratistham te jagad ahur anisvaram ।
aparasparasambhutam kim anyat kamahaitukam । 8

Meaning : ते *te :* they, जगत् *jagat :* the world, असत्यं *asatyam :* without authority (of the Vedas etc.), अप्रतिष्ठं *apratishtam :* without Dharma and Adharma, अनीश्वरं *anisvaram :* without the supreme Lord (the creator), कामहैतुक *kamahaitukam :* caused by sexual desire, अपरस्पर सम्भूतम् *aparasparasambhutam :* born of copulation of man and woman, अन्यत् *anyat :* other, किं *kim :* what, आहुः *ahuh :* (they) say.

Substance : They say that the world has no basis in the truth of the *Vedas* etc., that there are no *Dharma* and *Adharma*, that there is no Isvara, that the world is caused by the copulation of men and women urged by sexual desire only and nothing other than that.

Commentary : People of demonical nature can see only what their eyes behold. That is the truth for them. They think that the world is simply the result of the sexual desire of the male and the female. They deny the *Vedas*, the *Dharmic sastras*, and nay, they go to the extent of denying the Supreme Lord of the Universe.

That is the thesis of the people of *asuric* nature. What else can man think, blinded by ignorance, urged by sexual desires, torn asunder by evil passions? They see the world as merely the play-house of the lowest forces without truth and *Dharma*, without the Blessed Lord.

Question : *What further are the qualities of the people of demonical nature?*

Answer : They say that the world has no truth and it has no foundation in the 'Vedas', that there is no Isvara, (God) and that the world is caused by the sexual act of men and women urged by sensual desires.

9. एतां दृष्टिमवष्टभ्य नष्टात्मानोऽल्पबुद्धयः ।
प्रभवन्त्युग्रकर्माणः क्षयाय जगतोऽहिताः ॥ ९

Etam dristim avashtabhya nastatmano'lpabuddhayah ।
prabhavantyugrakarmanah kshayaya jagato'hitah । 9

Meaning : (*te :* they, of the demonical nature), एतां दृष्टिं *etam drishtam :* this attitude of denying Isvara, अवष्टभ्य *avashtabhya :* holding, नष्टात्मानः *nashtatmanah :* ruined souls, अल्पबुद्धयः *alpabuddhyah :* of little understanding, small intellect, उग्रकर्माणः *ugrakarmanah :* of fierce actions (attacking the good), अहिताः *ahitah :* enemies to the world, जगतः *jagatah :* of the world, क्षयाय *kshayaya :* for the destruction, प्रभवन्ति *prabhavanti :* are born, come forth.

Substance : Holding this view, these ruined souls of small understanding and fierce deeds, come forth as the enemies of the world for its destruction.

Commentary : *Nashtatmanah :* By the denial of Isvara, and the affirmation of sensual desire as the cause of this world, they have wholly identified themselves with the body and its lowest impulses. They are ruined souls. They are of little intellect, because they are not able to see anything beyond their eyes. Hence they deny the Supreme Self, *Paramatma* and destroy themselves. They are men of fierce deeds, always harassing and attacking the good and righteous. They are born for the destruction of the world. They are destroyers and not constructors of any thing. They are the demonical people, the Rakshasas in the human form.

Question : *What further are the qualities of people of demonical nature?*

Answer : They are 1) ruined souls, 2) of little intellect, 3) of fierce deeds, 4) and are born for the destruction of the world.

10. काममाश्रित्य दुष्पूरं दम्भमानमदान्विताः ।
मोहाद्गृहीत्वाऽसद्ग्राहान्प्रवर्तन्तेऽशुचिव्रताः ॥ १०

Kamam asritya dushpuram dambhamanamadanvitah ।
mohad grihitva'sadgrahan pravartante'suchivratah । 10

Meaning : दुष्पूरं *dushpuram* : impossible to satisfy, कामम् *kamam* : desire, आश्रित्य *asritya* : abiding in (enslaved by), दम्भमान मदान्विताः *dambhamanamadanvitah* : full of hypocricy, pride, arrogance, मोहात् *mohat* : by delusion, असद्ग्राहान *asadgrahan*: evil ideas (not held by the wise), गृहीत्वा *grihitva* : having held, अशुचिव्रताः *asuchivratah* : with impure vows, प्रवर्तन्ते *pravartante*: **they act.**

Substance : Enslaved by insatiable desire, full of pretension, pride and arrogance, holding evil ideas by delusion, they act with impure resolves.

Commentary : *Dushpuram* : Desire is insatiable. The more it is fed, the more it wants. Its hunger multiplies with every enjoyment. In the 3rd Discourse, the Lord has already described it as 'insatiable like fire' (*dushpurenanalenacha*). Therefore those who are enslaved by it, lead a restless and frustrated life.

Dambhamanamadanvitah : Pride, self-conceit, arrogance, these are the real enemies of man, separating him from all others by the assertion of superiority. Why should man subject himself to these evils ? The answer is given,-*mohat*. Ignorance is the cause. He deludes, denies truth, accepts false ideas, and does things which ought not to be done.

Asuchivratah : *Vrata* refers generally to vows of a *sattvic* nature, like fasting, silence etc. Such are (*Suchi-Vratas*) auspicious vows helpful to man in self-purification. But men of demonical nature adopt impure and unholy habits like flesh-eating, liquor and persist in them as sacred practices. Determination, performance of vows are no doubt good, but it should be

for pure and sacred purposes and not for foul and unholy things.

Question : *What is the nature of Kama ?*

Answer : It is insatiable.

Question : *What further are the qualities of persons having demonical nature ?*

Answer : 1) They yield to insatiable desires, 2) They are the victims of pride, self-conceit and arrogance, 3) They are ignorant, 4) They adopt impure and unholy vows.

11. चिन्तामपरिमेयां च प्रलयान्तामुपाश्रिताः ।
कामोपभोगपरमा एतावदिति निश्चिताः ॥ ११

12. आशापाशशतैर्बद्धाः कामक्रोधपरायणाः ।
ईहन्ते कामभोगार्थमन्यायेनार्थसञ्चयान् ॥ १२

Chintam aparimeyam cha pralayantam upasritah ।
kamopabhogaparama etavad iti nischitah । 11

Asapasasatairbaddhah kamakrodhaparayanah ।
ihante kamabhogartham anyayena'rthasamchayan । 12

Meaning : च *cha* : and, अपरिमेयान् *aparimeyan* : limitless, प्रलयान्ताम् *pralayantam* : till death, (or endless till the time of dissolution), चिन्ताम् *chintam* : thinking of objects (desires), उपाश्रिताः *upasritah* : holding to, कामोपभोगपरमाः *kamopabhoga-paramah* : thinking of enjoyments as the only purpose of life, एतावत् इति *etavat iti* : thus, that is all, निश्चिताः *nischitah* : determined, आशापाश शतैः *asapasa sataih* : by a hundred ties of hope, बद्धाः *baddah* : bound, कामक्रोध परायणाः *kamakrodha-parayanah* : with desire and anger as their way of life, कामभोगार्थ *kamabhogartham* : for enjoing the objective world, अन्यायेन *anyayena* : by wicked methods, अर्थ सञ्चयान् *artha-samchayan* : multitudes of welth, ईहन्ते *ehante* : desire for.

Substance: And they-(men of demonical nature) held by boundless desires unending till death (or dessolution of the world), thinking of sensual enjoyments as the goal of life, decided that there is nothing more to realise, bound by the cords of innumerable desires, prompted by passion and anger,—seek for wealth by unrighteous means to satisfy their thirst for enjoyment.

Commentary: The worldly man finds no end for his desires, wants and enjoyments. They can end only with the man's death, or the dissolution of the world. Let us understand clearly that desires do not end themselves at any time. They should be cut by the sword of discrimination, and burnt in the fire of *Jnana.* Otherwise they continue for ever. Being ignorant and deluded by *Maya*, they think and decide that there is nothing more than sensual enjoyment in the world, there is no such thing as *Dharma* or *Moksha*, and *Artha* and *Kama* alone exist for man. They see nothing beyond the body and the senses and so they conclude that sense-enjoyments, and bodily pleasures, are the only things to be sought for in the world. They are enslaved by innumerable desires. And so they have no rest or peace of mind. The desires clamour for satisfaction, and to satisfy the desires, they should have wealth. To secure the means of enjoyment they follow unrighteous means; By treachery, falsehoods etc., they get wealth and spend it in securing physical enjoyments. Thus they live a life of *kama* (lust) and *krodha* (anger), for, where there is *kama*, *krodha* follows as its closest associate.

The Lord's description of the demonical nature is vivid and horrible to contemplate. The devotees and the aspirants for *Jnana* should guard themselves carefully from these evils— 1) Desires, 2) unrighteous way of earning money. The second is the inevitable consequence of the first.

Question: *What further are the qualities of men of demonical nature?*

Answer: 1) Their desires are endless, 2) They regard enjoyment as the goal of life, 3) They deny any thing higher than that, 4) They are bound by innumerable wants, 5) They are possessed by pride and arrogance, 6) They gather wealth by unrighteous means for the purpose of satisfying their lust for enjoyment.

13. इदमद्य मया लब्धमिमं प्राप्स्ये मनोरथम् ।
इदमस्तीदमपि मे भविष्यति पुनर्धनम् ॥ १३

14. असौ मया हतः शत्रुर्हनिष्ये चापरानपि ।
ईश्वरोऽहमहं भोगी सिद्धोऽहं बलवान्सुखी ॥ १४

15. आढ्योऽभिजनवानस्मि कोऽन्योऽस्ति सदृशो मया ।
यक्ष्ये दास्यामि मोदिष्य इत्यज्ञानविमोहिताः ॥ १५

16. अनेकचित्तविभ्रान्ता मोहजालसमावृताः ।
प्रसक्ताः कामभोगेषु पतन्ति नरकेऽशुचौ ॥ १६

Idam adya maya labdham idam prapsye manoratham ।
idam asti'dam api me bhavishyati punar dhanam ॥ 13

Asau maya hatah satrur hanishye cha'paran api ।
Isvaro'ham aham bhogi siddho'ham balavan sukhi ॥ 14

Adhyo'bhijanavan asmi ko'nyo'sti sadriso maya ।
yakshye dasyami modishya ityajnanavimohitah ॥ 15

Aneka citta vibhranta mohajala samavritah ।
prasaktah kamabhogeshu patanti narake'suchau ॥ 16

Meaning: इदं *idam:* this, अद्य *adya:* now, मया *maya:* by me, लब्धं *labdham:* is gained, इदं मनोरथम् *idam manoratham:* this desire, प्राप्स्ये *prapsye:* (I) shall obtain, इदं *idam:* this (wealth), अस्ति *asti:*: is, इदं अपि धनम् *idam api dhanam:* this wealth also, मे *me:* to me, पुनः *punah:* again, भविष्यति *bhavishyati:* shall be, असौ शत्रुः *asau satruh:* this enemy, मया *maya:* by me, हतः *hatah:* is destroyed, अपरान् अपि च *aparan api cha:* and others also, हनिष्ये *hanishye:* (I) shall kill, अहम् *aham:* I, ईश्वरः *iswarah:* (am) the Lord, अहम् *aham:* I, भोगी *bhogi:*

(am) enjoyer, अहम् *aham* : I, सिद्धः *siddhah* : (am) capable of achieving things desired, बलवान् *balavan* : mighty, सुखी *sukhi* : happy, आढ्यः *adhyah* : rich, अभिजनवान् *abhijanavan* : born in great family, अस्मि *asmi* : (I) am, मया *maya* : with me, सदृशः *sadrisah* : equal, अन्यः *anyah* : another, कः *kah* : who, अस्ति *asti* : is, यक्ष्ये *yakshye* : (I) will perform sacrifice, दास्यामि *dasyami* : (I) will give, मोदिष्ये *modishye* : (I) will rejoice, इति *iti* : in this way, अज्ञान विमोहिताः *ajnanavimohitah* : deluded by ignorance, अनेकचित्तविभ्रान्ताः *aneka chitta vibhrantah* : bewildered by many fancies and notions, मोहजाल समावृताः *mohajala samavritah* : surrounded by the snare of delusions (of possessions), कामभोगेषु *kamabhogeshu* : in sensual enjoyments, प्रसक्ताः *prasaktah* : deeply attached, (*santah* : having becom). अशुचौ *asuchau* : foul, नरके *narake* : into hell, पतन्ति *patanti* : fall.

Substance : Now this is gained by me; this desire I shall obtain; this wealth I have and this wealth also shall be to me hereafter.

This enemy is destroyed by me; and others also I shall kill; I am the Load; I am the enjoyer; I am capable of achieving my ambitions; I am mighty and happy.

I am rich; I am born in a great family; who is there another equal to me? I will perform sacrifice. I will give; I will rejoice,–in this way, deluded by ignorance,

Bewildered by many fancies and notions, caught in the snare of delusion (of possessions), deeply immersed in sensual enjoyment, they (the men of demonical nature) fall into foul hell.

Commentary : The Lord gives a dramatic picture of the man of demonical nature. What he thinks is stated in direct speech, so that one can understand the spirit animating these

unfortunate men who go down into foul hell. These words reveal the pride, greed, hatred, lust and delusion of these men of demonical nature.

Desires are never satisfied by enjoyment. With every luxury provided, more desires crop up for more refined luxuries. Wealth finds no end for the greedy men. He calculates what he has and hopes to get more and more in future. His mind is full of plans, plots and schemes to get more money by crooked means. He is proud of his power. He says 'I have killed this enemy and other enemies also I shall destroy.' So he is puffed up with the idea of his own invincibility. He thinks he is mighty and happy, born in a great family, the Lord of all, strong, powerful, unequal to any other. 'Who is there equal to me?' is his challenge to the world.

What is the end for all this demonical pride, hatred and lust? The end is hell. Foul hell. Such men go down into the lowest worlds. They have no rest or peace, for, their minds are like the ocean tempest, lost by the winds of desires and bashed by lustful passions of sensual enjoyments. They appear to be great men, because they are wealthy and powerful, but if one has a glimpse into their self, he finds that they are like men stung by a hundred scorpians. If they do sacrifices and offer gifts, it is all done for self-glorification only. There is no truth in them. The bloated ego puffed up with pride, dominates them to such an extent that they declare themselves 'I am Isvara'.

They are deluded by ignorance. The 'rajasic' nature over-powers them and ignorance (*tamas*) shrouds them in complete darkness, and they are unable to understand the true end of human life. They have no idea of the true nature of men and the world, and the Supreme behind all. They are deeply attached to earthly objects and live a life of restless ecstacy.

The true nature of the 'sattvic' man who is pure-hearted is never understood by them. Even if it is explained to them, they will not understand it. They consider the great teachers of the world as mad-caps, and their message as empty and foolish. What

is their fate? The Lord emphatically declares that such men fall into foul Hell. That is the right royal road to Hell, the primrose path to eternal bonfire'. Let the spiritual aspirants beware of it.

Question: *What further are the qualities of people of demonical nature?*

Answer: "This is gained, by me now, this desire I shall obtain, this wealth I have and this wealth also shall be to me hereafter, this enemy is destroyed by me and others also I shall kill, I am the Lord, I am the enjoyer, I am capable of achieving my ambitions, I am mighty and happy, I am rich, I am born in a great family, who is there another equal to me? I will perform sacrifice, I will give, I will rejoice"—in this way deluded by ignorance, bewildered by many fancies and notions, caught in the snare of delusion (of wife, sons, house and possession), deeply immersed in sensual enjoyment they fall into foul Hell. These are the qualities of the man of demonical nature.

17. आत्मसंभाविताः स्तब्धा धनमानमदान्विताः ।
यजन्ते नामयज्ञैस्ते दम्भेनाविधिपूर्वकम् ॥ १७

18. अहंकारं बलं दर्पं कामं क्रोधं च संश्रिताः ।
मामात्मपरदेहेषु प्रद्विषन्तोऽभ्यसूयकाः ॥ १८

Atmasambhavitah stabdha dhanamana-nadanvitah ।
yajante namayajnaiste dambhena'vidhipurvakam ॥ 17

Ahamkaram balam darpam
kamam krodham cha samsritah ।
mam atmaparadeheshu
pradvishanto'bhyasuyakah ॥ 18

Meaning: आत्मसंभाविताः *atmasambhavitah*: gloryfying themselves, स्तब्धाः *stabdhah*: devoid of humility before elders, धनमान मदान्विताः *dhanamanamadanvitah*: possessed by the pride and arrogance of wealth, अहंकारं *ahamkaram*: egoism, बलं *balam*: streugth, दर्पं *darpam*: pride, कामं *kamam*: desire, क्रोधं च *krodham cha*: and hatred, संश्रिताः *samsritah*: possessing, आत्मपर देहेषु *atmaparadeheshu*: in themselves and others, माम् *mam*: Me (the Eternal Lord), प्रद्विषन्तः *pradvishantah*: hating, अभ्यसूयकाः *abhyasuyakah*: envious, ते *te*: they (men of demonical nature), दम्भेन *dambhena*: with pretension, अविधिपूर्वकम् *avidhipurvakam*: against the Laws of the Sastras, नामयज्ञैः *namayajanaih*: by sacrifices only in name, यजन्ते *yajante*: sacrifice (worship).

Substance: Self-conceited, devoid of humility, filled with pride and intoxicated with wealth, they perform sacrifices only in name with great ostentation, contrary to *'sastraic'* injunctions;

Given over to egotism, power, pride, lust and hatred, they (men of demonical nature) filled with malice, hate Me in their own bodies and in those of others.

Commentary: *Atmasambhavitah, pradvishantah*: By these two words, two great evils are exposed 1) Self-glorification, and 2) humiliating others. This is the first sign of ignorance. The ignorant consider themselves learned, wise, great and glorious. On the other side, they belittle other people and try to expose their defects and humiliate them. They hate God, the ruler of the universe because they cannot be reconciled to any one greater or higher than themselves. They oppose the laws of God as declared in the *Vedas* and the *Sastras*. They are blinded by their own wealth, power and prosperity. They perform sacrifices with great ostentation to glorify their own name. They have no devotion. Such sacrifices are contrary to the ordinances prescribed in the *Sastras*.

Mam atmaparadeheshu: They hate *Paramatma* who is dwelling in the hearts of all beings, as well as in their own hearts. The Lord is present in every being as the Eternal

witness. Not realising this truth, men of demonical nature hate others and are hated by others of such nature. To hate another being is to hate the Lord who is present in him. In the same way, to love another being is to love the Lord Himself. Men who worship the Lord do not hate others at all (*adveshtasarva bhutanam*). Men who hate and injure others are hating God Himself who is ever present in them.

The stronger terms *Samsritah* and *Pradvishantah* are used to suggest that they are held powerfully by *kama* and *krodha*, and hate the Lord intensely.

Question : *What further are the qualities of men of demonical nature ?*

Answer : 1) They glorify themselves, 2) They are devoid of humility towards elders, 3) They are intoxicated with the pride of wealth, 4) They perform sacrifices ostentatiously for the sake of name and fame. 5) Pride, (animal) strength, lust greed, and hatred, possess them. 6) They hate the Lord who is dwelling in their hearts, and in the hearts of others 7) They are full of jealousy (envious of other's prosperity).

Question : *Where is God ?*

Answer : He is present as the Eternal Lord in all beings.

The Lord, having declared the fate of diabolical men in the 16th verse continues the description of such men, in these two verses also.

Evidently, the teacher of the Gita wants His disciple to understand the horrible nature and the terrible fate that shall overtake such men. Nothing can save such men from self-destruction. They may be rich, powerful and learned also, but nothing can change the course of their life, because they deny the existence of *Paramatma* and consider life only as a field for sensual gratification. Mere cleverness, worldly intelligence and wisdom do not take them outside the category of the *Rakshasas*. They possess many powers as we find in the case of Ravana and

Hiranyakaspu, but they are ignorant of the one basic truth, namely, that all they possess is derived from the Lord Himself, and He is the supreme *Purusha* present in all beings. These demonical characteristics poison the hearts of many people in this world. Such men are all Rakshasas in the human form. The impure impulses of *kama* and *krodha* are demons having taken possession of man's being. The seekers should thoroughly search their hearts and find out these dark and evil spirits, and drive them out by the sheer force of will and the grace of the Lord. The *sattvic* power of man is capable of destroying these *rajasic* and *tamasic* forces. The *sattvic* power has already been described by the Lord as *Daivisampat*, beginning with *abhayam* as it's first principle. These divine qualities should be grafted into one's own nature and as they grow stronger and stronger, the enemical forces are quelled and vanquished. Victory will be sure.

The scriptural call for the divine, 'O ye Devas! come, O ye Rakshasas go'-should be followed by all the aspirants. The evil spirits should quit and the Divine beings should come to occupy the heart. Thus man's heart is transformed into the temple of God, in which *Atmajnana* dawns in due time.

The Lord declares the fate of the men of demonical nature.

19. तानहं द्विषतः क्रूरान्संसारेषु नराधमान् ।
क्षिपाम्यजस्रमशुभानासुरीष्वेव योनिषु ॥ १९

Tan aham dvishatah kruran samsareshu naradhaman ।
kshipamy ajasram asubhan asurishveva yonishu ॥ 19

Meaning : द्विषतः *dvishatah* : hating Me (in themselves and in all beings), क्रूरान् *kruran* : cruel, अशुभान् *asubhan* : thinking and doing evil thoughts and deeds (impure in body and mind), तान् *tan* : those, नराधमान् *naradhaman* : worst of men, अहम् *aham* : I, संसारेषु *samsareshu* : in the path of birth and death, आसुरीषु योनिषु एव *asurishu yonishu eva* : in the wombs of demons only, अजस्रम् *ajasram* : for ever, क्षिपामि *kshipami* : (I) hurl.

Substance : The haters of Me (in themselves and in other beings), cruel, thinking and doing evil thoughts and deeds, the worst men, I hurl (them) always into the wombs of the demons in the endless process of birth and death.

Commentary : *Dvishatah* : Those who hate others hate the Lord, for, He is in the hearts of all beings.

What terrible punishment comes to these diabolical men is declared here. That righteousness should yield its own good fruit and *Adharma* should yield its own evil fruit in the eternal law of the Almighty, operating in Nature. No one can escape punishment when the law of *Dharma* is violated. Such men shall be responsible for their own down-fall. The Lord has already described the Divine qualities of righteousness. If people deny them, and adopt the opposite way of life, they shall be hurled into lower and lower planes of existence. They shall be tossed about in the flood of *samsara*, and undergo all the ills and pains of birth and death. So all people should be vigilent and cautious about what nature they cultivate in the course of their life. They should take to the Divine nature and obtain liberation.

Tan aham : The Lord proclaims that He hurls them into the wombs of demons of cruel beasts and poisonous reptiles. He, the Lord, is the controller of the universe. He is the Law-giver; He is the dispenser of man's actions, good and bad; He is the decider of the fate of every *Jiva* in the universe.

Naradhaman : The Lord condemns these men of demonical nature, as the worst and lowest of men. He is indignant with them, and takes many shapes and forms to destroy them (*Vinasaya cha dushkritam*). He has already declared why He takes birth in the world It is both to protect the righteous and destroy the wicked. Man is endowed with reason and discrimination. He should be the best of men and not the worst of men; he should strive to be *Purushottama* and not to be *Purushadhama*. So all people should have devotion and fear of the Lord, for He is ever watchful to find out the wicked and hurl them into demonical wombs.

Samsareshu asurishveva yonishu : The plural form is used to indicate that these diabolical men have to pass through many many births, as beasts and reptiles and *Asuras*. As the effect of their own actions they are caught in the whirlpool of *samsara*, live beastly lives and die. And again they are born as beasts and continue in this state for many many births. They cannot escape punishment. Like the goat that tries to run away from the butcher but is caught by him and killed, these men are seized by the Lord and punished till the last moment of their unrighteous lives. In the Garuda Purana the fate of evil-doers and the different punishments that they suffer in hell for different crimes, are clearly described. So, it is the duty of all real men to avoid this fate by adopting the Divine qualities, the *sattvic* way of life, and attain *Moksha*.

Kshipami : The Lord says, 'I hurl them,' as one would hurl a stone or impure thing away from him. The seekers should clearly understand the Lord's idea about those who deny Him and follow *Adharmic* way of life. The Lord is full of grace to those who follow His injunctions and those who deny Him and act against His command should face the penalty by the unalterable decree of God.

Ajasram : (Always) - As long as evil tendencies occupy the mind and urge man to evil deeds, he shall have to suffer the fate of beasts and reptiles. Their pain and suffering has no end. Sorrow follows them like their own shadow. Some people usually ask the question, 'Sir, How long are we to bear the pains of *samsara* ?' The answer is—as long as ignorance and delusion covers their mind, as long as they are provoked into evil ways by their own unbridled and impure *samskaras*, as long as they forget God, as long as they are proud, hateful and cruel-they shall not be liberated from *samsara*. 'Give up the Satanic tendencies in you, gain the divine qualities, and you shall thereafter quickly attain peace.-'This is the Lord's advice to the sincere aspirants. The word '*ajasram*' (always) indicates that the Divine law is eternal and operates for all time.

Question ; *What is the fate of these men of diabolical nature, who hate God ?*

Answer : They shall be hurled into demonical wombs, the wombs of beasts and reptiles, till their bad *karma* is exhausted.

Question : *How long does the Divine law operate ?*

Answer : For all time (ajasram).

Born in demonical wombs they go down and down into lower states.

20. आसुरीं योनिमापन्ना मूढा जन्मनि जन्मनि
मामप्राप्यैव कौन्तेय ततो यान्त्यधमां गतिम् ॥ २०

Asurim yonim apanna mudha janmani janmani ।
mam aprapyai'va kaunteya tato yantyadhamam gatim ॥ 20

Meaning : कौन्तेय *Kaunteya* : O Arjuna ! आसुरीं *asurim* : demonical, योनिं *yonim* : womb (birth), आपन्नाः *apannah* : obtaining, मूढाः *mudhah* : the ignorant, जन्मनि जन्मनि *janmani janmani* : in birth after birth, माम् *mam* : Me, अप्राप्य एव *aprapya eva* : not attaining, ततः *tatah* : then (after that birth), अधमाम् *adhamam*: lower, गतिं *gatim* : condition, यान्ति *yanti* : (they) fall into.

Substance O Arjuna ! Entering into demonical wombs, in birth after birth, deluded, they thus fall into lower state than that.

Commentary : The Lord describes the progress of these wicked men after they are hurled into demonical wombs. They do not attain Him because they are deluded. So they go down into lower and lower states of existence. They are born as cruel beasts and then as reptiles and then again as beasts and poisonous trees and so on. That is their fate. As the rubber ball dropped on the top of the stair-case rolls down step by step, these evil souls go down into lower and lower conditions. Hearing this exhortation of the Lord, and the graphic description of

the fate of evil doers, who would not wake up to the realities of life and action ? Who would not turn away from evil ? Who would not surrender to the Lord ? Who would not pray to Him to be saved ? We can understand why the Lord presents the fate of evil-doers so picturesquely, so intensely and with such terrific force. He warns mankind, a terrible warning it is indeed which only the most abandoned souls could fail to understand. Let mankind wake up to truth, and know where they are, what they are, and what their fate would be. Let them not go down into hell, but lift themselves up by devotion to the Lord, and by the steady cultivation of the Divine qualities.

Question : *What is the fate of those who are born in demonical wombs ?*

Answer : Failing to reach God, they go down into lower and lower births.

Question : *What then is the way to be saved ?*

Answer : Rejection of the demoniacal qualities and adoption of the Divine Natute.

The Lord explains the way to escape from the triple gateway ta Hell.

21. त्रिविधं नरकस्येदं द्वारं नाशनमात्मनः ।
कामः क्रोधस्तथा लोभस्तस्मादेतत्त्रयं त्यजेत् ॥ २१

Trividham narakasye'dam dvaram nasanam atmanah ।
kamah krodhas tatha lobhas tasmad etat trayam tyajet ॥ 21

Meaning : कामः *kamah* : desire, क्रोधः *krodhah* : anger, तथा *tatha* : so also, लोभः *lobhah* : greed, इदं *idam* : this (three evils together), त्रिविधं *trividham* : triple, नरकस्य *narakasya* : of hell, द्वारं *dvaram* : gateway, आत्मनः *atmanah* : of oneself, नाशनम् *nasanam* : destruction, तस्मात् *tasmat* : therefore, एतत्त्रयं *etat trayam* : these three (evils), त्यजेत् *tyajet* : (one should) abandon.

Substance : Triple is the gateway of Hell-desire, anger, and greed,-destructive of one's self; therefore one should abandon the triple evil.

Commentary : The Lord reiterates what has been said already. *Kama*, *krodha*, and *lobha* form the triple opening into Hell. They are the three evils (*Dushtatrayam*) which directly lead man into the lower worlds. When these gates are shut by dispassion, love and detachment, there is no fear for man. The demonical qualities so elaborately described so far, are epitomised and classified into three essential evils 1) Desire, 2) Wrath, 3) Greed. Desire is to be conquered by dispassion, wrath by love, greed by discrimination and detachment. There is hope for the awakened souls who have become conscious of the evils in them, and the horrible future that awaits them if they do not destroy these evils. Striving for purity and the higher way of life they shall shut down the gateways to Hell. These evils lurking in the heart like thieves in darkness, should be detected by the torch-light of knowledge and should be driven out with the help of the Divine qualities.

Question : *What are the three gateways to Hell* ?

Answer : They are 1) Kama, 2) Krodha, 3) Lobha.

Question : *How do they injure the Jiva* ?

Answer : They are self-destructive.

Question : *What then should the spiritual aspirants do* ?

Answer : They should abandon these three evils.

Question : *What are the evils of demonical nature* ?

Answer : Kama, Krodha and Lobha, are the fundamental evils of the Asuric nature.

He who frees himself from these three evils accomplishes his own well-being.

22. एतैर्विमुक्तः कौन्तेय तमोद्वारैस्त्रिभिर्नरः ।
आचरत्यात्मनः श्रेयस्ततो याति परां गतिम् ॥ २२

Etair vimuktah kaunteya tamodvaraistribhir narah ।
acharatyatmanah sreyas tato yati param gatim ॥ 22

Meaning : कौन्तेय *Kaunteya* : O Arjuna! एतैः *etaih* : from this, त्रिभिः *tribhih* : triple, तमोद्वारैः *tamodvaraih* : gateways of darkness (leading to Hell), विमुक्तः *vimuktah* : freed, नरः *narah* : man, आत्मनः *atmanah* : his own, श्रेयः *sreyah* : well-being, आचरति *acharati* : works out, ततः *tatah* : and then, परां *param* : supreme, गतिम् *gatim* : goal, याति *yati* : attains.

Substance : O Arjuna! Freed from the triple gateways of darkness (leading to Hell) man accomplishes his own well-being, and attains the highest goal.

Commentary : So long as the triple evil of desire, anger, and greed poison the heart of man, he cannot do any good. He cannot accomplish his own well-being. Therefore man should first purify his heart by reducing and eliminating these corrosive evils. Then he spontaneously rises to higher planes of spiritual life and attains Mokha. Like the sun and moon freed from the darkening grip of Rahu and Ketu, like the Gajendra freed from the death hold of the crocodile(*Makara*), like the prisoner brought out into the sunlight from the darkness of the prison-cell, the *Jiva* should liberate himself from the strangle-hold of these three evils. He should become *vimuktah*(i.e.) completely free from them. The idea is that there should not be any trace of these evils anywhere in the mind. They are the gateways of darkness (i.e.) they are forms of ignorance (*avidya*) where there is no gleam of light,where every thing is plunged in darkness. Such a man is like one living in a closed house full of darkness. He lives in sorrow and perishes in sorrow.

Acharatyatmanah sreyah: The well-being of self requires thoughtful discrimination of the real and the unreal. What is this life ? What is this world ? What is the end and aim of life ? These questions arise in the mind of the *sattvic* man who is

partially awakened to find out the truth. But the man who is possessed by lust, anger and greed, cannot think of these things at all, because his whole mind is absorbed in sensual cravings, is agitated by anger, and confounded by inordinate greed. So, the seeker should keep away from these evils and that is in itself the great good that man can do unto himself. For, where these evils are not, the mind is pure, and when the mind is pure, he enjoys bliss of the Self.

Param gatim : *Moksha* is the highest goal and there is no state higher than that. It is implied that the lowest state is that of demonical ignorance resulting in *Kama* and *Krodha*.

Question : *Where do the triple evils of lust, anger and greed lead to ?*

Answer : To Hell. They are the gateways to **darkness.**

Question : *Who aspires for Moksha ?*

Answer : The man who is freed from **these three evils.**

Question : *What is Moksha ?*

Answer : It is the perfect state of **freedom** from all **kinds** of bondage.

Who acts contray to the injunctions of the Sastras cannot attain the goal.

23. यः शास्त्रविधिमुत्सृज्य वर्तते कामकारतः ।
न स सिद्धिमवाप्नोति न सुखं न परां गतिम् ॥ २३

Yah sastravidhim utsrijya vartate kamakaratah ।
na sa siddhim avapnoti na sukham na param gatim । 23

Meaning : यः *yah* : who, शास्त्रविधिं *sastravidhim* : scriptural ordinances, उत्सृज्य *utsrijya* : casting aside, कामकारतः *kamakaratah* : under the impulse of desire, वर्तते *vartate* : acts, सः *sah* : he, सिद्धिं *siddhim* : perfection (either Purushartha or Jnana), न अवाप्नोति *na avapnoti* : does not attain, न सुखं *na sukham* : does not get happiness, न परां गतिं *na paramgatim* : does not attain the supreme goal.

Substance : He who, casting aside *Sastraic* injunctions, acts under the impulse of his desires, attains not life's good (*purushartha*) nor happiness, nor the supreme goal (*paramartha*).

Commentary : Indisciplined conduct under the impulse of one's own desires and passions is condemned here. We come across people who act in their own way, and try to make a philosophy out of it. This is wrong. It is only a mask to cover up their own unbridled passions and evil desires. They deny the authority of the *Sastras*, because they are deluded by ignorance and agitated by sensual desires. The *Sastras* embody the laws of life both secular and spiritual, which have been discovered after long research into the meaning and purpose of human life by the greatest of men, the *Rishis*, whose only aim was the welfare of humanity. They stated the laws following which man attains the best things in secular life and the highest goal in spiritual life. So, every true seeker should test his way of life, his thoughts, feelings and actions by referring them to the scriptural laws. Where they do not conform to the *Sastras*, they should be checked and restrained, and right methods should be adopted. The Lord declares that no good can be achieved by acting contrary to the commands of the *Sastras*, because the *Sastras* express the will of God. So, the seekers should carefully study the *Sastras* and mould their life accordingly, so that they can secure both worldly happiness and spiritual realisation.

Question : *What is the rule of conduct for man ?*

Answer : The laws of the scriptures.

Question : *How should man act ?*

Answer : He should act according to scriptural ordinances

Question : *What will happen if man acts contrary to the laws of the Sastras ?*

Answer : He cannot attain either worldly happiness or spiritual realisation.

Question : *What then is the way to happiness and spiritual welfare ?*

Answer : Following the scriptures.

Question: *What is the highest goal of humanity?*

Answer : Moksha (perfection).

The Lord instructs Arjuna to follow the injunctions of the Sastras.

24. तस्माच्छास्त्रं प्रमाणं ते कार्याकार्यव्यवस्थितौ ।
ज्ञात्वा शास्त्रविधानोक्तं कर्म कर्तुमिहार्हसि ॥ २४

Tasmacchastram pramanam te karyakaryavyavasthitau
jnatva sastravidhanoktam karma kartum iha'rhasi 24

Meaning: तस्मात् *tasmat*: therefore, ते *te*: to you, कार्याकार्य व्यवस्थितौ *karyakaryavyavasthitau*: in determining what ought to be done and what ought not to be done, शास्त्रं *sastram*: the scripture, प्रमाणं *pramanam*: (is) authority, शास्त्रविधानोक्तं *sastravidhanoktam*: what is prescribed by the laws of of the Sastras, ज्ञात्वा *jnatva*: having known, इह *iha*: in this world, कर्म *karma*: action, कर्तुम् अर्हसि *kartum arhasi*: you should do.

Substance: Therefore, in determining what ought to be done and what ought not to be done, the Scripture is your authority; having known the laws of the Scripture, you should do work in this world.

Commentary: What ought to be done or what ought not to be done in any particular situation? The decision is by the *Sastras* and not by individual opinion. The Scripture is the authority. As it is declared in the previous verse, man can achieve all the good things of life, happiness and *moksha* also, if he acts strictly according to the scriptural injunctions. Action contrary to them leads to unhappiness, frustration, and death. One can understand how the Lord values the *Vedas* and the *Sastras*, when He, *Paramatma* Himself declares them to be the highest authority. Let everybody then put his faith in the *Sastras*, and model his life in harmony with their laws. This is enough. That will lead him to the goal.

Sastravidhanoktam: The method of action, *Karma*, is clearly stated in the *Sastras* with all the minutest details. They should be studied and understood first, before plunging into action. Knowledge of the *Sastras* will help people to perform *Karma* in the best way possible, and by such *Karma* the mind is purified, and then *Atmajnana* is revealed in due course.

Karmakartum iharhasi: The Lord teaches Arjuna to act, to work, and to perform *Karma*. The condition is that it should conform to the ordinances of the scripture. The Discourse ends with special emphasis on *Karma Yoga*, and the performance of one's duty in the special circumstances in which a man is placed.

Question: *What is the authority to determine what ought to be done and what ought not to be done?*

Answer : The Sastras. One should act according to the declarations of the Sastras.

Question: *How should man act?*

Answer : He should act after understanding the laws of the Sastras.

Question: *What should be the method of action?*

Answer : As it is determined by the Sastras.

इति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे
श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे दैवासुरसंपद्विभागयोगो नाम
षोडशोऽध्यायः ॥

Iti Srimad Bhagavadgitasupanishatsu brahmavidyayam yogasastre
Sri Krishnarjuna samvade Daivasurasampadvibhaga
yogo nama shodaso'dhyayah

Thus, in the glorious Upanishads of the Bhagavad Gita, in the Science of the Eternal, in the scriptures of Yoga, in the dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna ends the
Sixteenth Discourse entitled
Daivasurasampadvibhaga Yoga
(The Yoga of the division
between the Divine and the Demonical)

ॐ

श्री भगवद्गीता

SRI BHAGAVAD GITA

अथ सप्तदशोऽध्यायः

Atha saptadasodhyayah

SEVENTEENTH DISCOURSE

श्रद्धात्रयविभाग योगः

SRADDHATRAYA VIBHAGA YOGA

THE YOGA OF THREEFOLD FAITH

I. Title of the Discourse :

Sraddha (faith) is threefold–*Sattvic*, *Rajasic* and *Tamasic*. The qualities and actions of the three types of men endowed with the threefold faith are described in this Discourse, and so it is entitled "Sraddhatraya vibhaga yoga".

II. Important points of the Discourse :

1) The threefold Sraddha	(1–3)
2) The threefold forms of worship; Austerity contrary to the Sastras	(4–6)
3) Threefold types of food	(7–10)
4) Threefold types of Yajna	(11–13)
5) Threefold types of Tapas	(14–19)
6) Threefold types of Dana	(20–22)
7) Commentary on the mantra OM Tat Sat	(23–27)
8) Work devoid of Sraddha	(28)

III. How this Discourse is connected with the previous one :

At the end of the previous Discourse, the Lord declared categorically that no good could be achieved without adhering to the Scriptural ordinances. A doubt cropped up in Arjuna's mind when he heard it, and he presents his doubt to the Lord at once. "What would be the position of a person who is conducting worship with faith (Sraddha) though it is contrary to the *Sastras* ? How would it be described–*Sattvic*, *Rajasic*, or *Tamasic* ?" The Discourse starts with Arjuna's question.

अर्जुन उवाच

1. ये शास्त्रविधिमुत्सृज्य यजन्ते श्रद्धयान्विताः ।
तेषां निष्ठा तु का कृष्ण सत्त्वमाहो रजस्तमः ॥ १

Arjuna uvacha

Ye sastravidhim utsrijya yajante sraddhaya'nvitah ।
tesham nishtha tu ka krishna sattvam aho rajas tamah ॥ 1

अर्जुन उवाच *Arjuna uvacha :* Arjuna said.

Meaning : कृष्ण *Krishna :* O Krishna ! ये *ye :* those who, शास्त्रविधिम् *sastravidhim :* the ordinances of the Sastra, उत्सृज्य *utsrijya :* setting aside, श्रद्धयान्विताः *sraddhayanvitah :* endowed with faith, यजन्ते *yajante :* worship, तेषां *tesham :* their, निष्ठा तु *nishtha tu :* condition verily, का *ka :* what, सत्त्वं *sattvam :* sattva, आहो *aho :* or, रजः *rajah :* Rajas, तमः *tamah :* Tamas.

Substance : Arjuna said : O Krishna ! What is the condition of those who perform worship with faith, though contrary to the law of the Scriptures, *Sattvic*, *Rajasic* or *Tamasic* ?

Commentary: It was declared that action contrary to *Sastraic* commands cannot lead to perfection. But there are people who have not read the *Sastras* either by indifference or incompetance or other reasons, and yet who believe in a higher power and carry on some form of worship and perform sacrifices.

These men are different from the demonical type, because the latter entirely deny the existence of the Higher power. These people have faith, but it is not in conformity with the *Sastras.* What is their condition ? What is the nature of their worship ? This is Arjuna's question.

The Lord's explanation—

श्री भगवानुवाच

2. त्रिविधा भवति श्रद्धा देहिनां सा स्वभावजा ।
साित्त्वकी राजसी चैव तामसी चेति तां शृणु ॥

Sri Bhagavan uvacha

Trividha bhavati sraddha dehinam sa svabhavaja ।
sattviki rajasi chai'va tamasi che'ti tam srinu ॥ 2

श्री भगवानुवाच *Sri Bhagavan Uvacha :* The blessed Lord said.

Meaning : देहिनां *dehinam :* of beings, स्वभावजा *svabhavaja :* born of nature, (past Samskaras,) सा श्रद्धा *sa sraddha :* that faith, साित्त्वकी *sattviki :* sattvic, राजसी एव च *rajasi eva cha :* and also Rajasic, तामसी च *tamasi cha :* and Tamasic, इति *iti :* thus, त्रिविधा *trividha :* threefold, भवति *bhavati :* is, तां *tam :* that, शृणु *srinu :* hear.

Substance : The Blessed Lord said : Born of the nature (past Samskaras) of beings, that faith (Sraddha) is threefold *Sattvic*, *Rajasic* and *Tamasic.* Now hear about it.

Commentary : *Svabhavaja :* Men are born with different objects of faith, according to their practice and experience in past births. It comes to them as an inherited quality, and determines the nature of their worship and sacrifice.

Question : *What is the threefold Sraddha ?*

Answer : It is Sattvic, Rajasic and Tamasic.

Question : *What is the cause of this difference ?*

Answer : Nature (i.e.) the Samskaras of the previous births, is the cause of the distinction.

Sraddha (past Samskara) or quality is the essence of man, is man himself.

3. सत्त्वानुरूपा सर्वस्य श्रद्धा भवति भारत ।
श्रद्धामयोऽयं पुरुषो यो यच्छ्रद्धः स एव सः ॥ ३

Sattvanurupa sarvasya sraddha bhavati bharata ।
sraddhamayo'yam purusho yo yacchraddhah sa eva sah 3

Meaning : भारत *Bharata :* O Arjuna ! सर्वस्य *sarvasya :* of all beings, सत्त्वानुरूपा *sattvanurupa :* according to the nature (previous Samskaras) of their mind, श्रद्धा *sraddha :* quality (faith), भवति *bhavati :* is, अयं *ayam :* this, पुरुषः *purushah :* Jiva (man), श्रद्धामयः *sraddhamayah :* of the form of (Sraddha) qualities, यः *yah :* who, यत् श्रद्धा *yat sraddha :* what quality (faith), सः *sah :* he, सः एव *sah eva :* that (Sraddha) only, (bhavati : is).

Substance : O Arjuna ! the faith of each man is in confirmity with his nature (past Samskaras); the very essence of the *Jiva* is faith; as a man's faith is, so is he. (He adopts that faith and becomes that)

Commentary : The mind (the inner organ) is alone the *Jiva* (man). So if the mind is pure, purity becomes the essence of that man. Here the word '*sattva*' means mind. Every individual acquires that nature which he has brought with him from his experience in former births. And his faith takes on that quality only. He is that faith, qualified by his Samskaras. So, it is the duty of man to instil Sattvic disposition into his character and by practice transcend that also to reach the highest state. The *Tamasic* and *Rajasic* kinds of *Sraddha* should be abandoned, because they pull man downwards into lower forms of existence. Among the qualities *Sattva* is the nearest to *Atma*, and in *Suddha-sattva*, man directly perceives *Atma*, and enters the *Nirguna* state. That is the real self of man, that is his final goal.

Question : *What kind of Sraddha does man acquire ?*

Answer : It is in conformity with the disposition of his mind.

Question : *With what is man filled ?*

Answer : Sraddha.

Question : *What is the state of man ?*

Answer : It is just what his mind is. This state is called *Jiva*. (The real man is the supreme Self and not the reflected personality created in the mind).

The nature of man's worship is in accordance with the quality of his faith.

4. यजन्ते सात्त्विका देवान्यक्षरक्षांसि राजसाः ।
प्रेतान्भूतगणांश्चान्ये यजन्ते तामसा जनाः ॥ ४

Yajante sattvika devan yaksharakshamsi rajasah ।
pretan bhutaganamscha'nye yajante tamasa janah । 4

Meaning : सात्त्विकाः *sattvikah :* men of Sattvaguna, देवान् *devan :* Devas, यजन्ते *yajante :* worship, राजसाः *rajasah:* men of Rajoguna, यक्षरक्षांसि *yaksharakhasamsi :* the Yakshas and Rakshasas, यजन्ते *yajante :* worship, अन्ये *anye :* others, तामसा जनाः *tamasah janah :* men of Tamoguna, प्रेतान् *pretan :* the hosts of departed souls, भूतगणां च *bhutaganah cha :* and the hosts of Bhutas, यजन्ते *yajante :* worship.

Substance : Men of Sattvaguna worship the Devas; men of Rajoguna worship the Yakshas and Rakshasas; men of Tamoguna worship the hosts of departed souls and Nature-spirits.

Commentary : In the 14th Discourse, the Lord has already described the three Gunas, and how men dominated by each think and act in the world. The Lord is explaining the same idea in a different context.

The Lord condemns the frightful body—mortifying austerities of the Asuric type of men.

5. अशास्त्रविहितं घोरं तप्यन्ते ये तपो जनाः ।
दम्भाहङ्कारसंयुक्ताः कामरागबलान्विताः ॥ ५

6. कर्शयन्तः शरीरस्थं भूतग्राममचेतसः ।
मां चैवान्तःशरीरस्थं तान्विद्ध्यासुरनिश्चयान् ॥ ६

Asastravihitam ghoram tapyante ye tapo janah ।
dambhahankara samyuktah kama raga balanvitah । 5

Karsayantah sarirastham bhutagramam achetasah ।
mam chaivantahsarirastham tan viddhyasuranischayan 6

Meaning : ये जनाः *ye janah :* which people, शरीरस्थं *sarirastham :* dwelling in the body, भूतग्रामम् *bhutagramam :* the aggregate of the elements (or the senses), कर्शयन्तः *karsayantah :* torturing, अन्तः शरीरस्थं *antassarirastham :* dwelling within the vehicle of the body, माम् च एव *mam cha eva :* even Me also, कर्शयन्तः *karsayantah :* torturing, दंभाहंकार संयुक्ताः *dambhahankarasamyuktah :* possessed by pretension and pride, कामराग बलान्विताः *kamaragabalanvitah :* combined with lust, longing, and animal strength, अचेतसः *achetasah :* devoid of understanding, अशास्त्र विहितम् *asastravihitam :* contrary to the laws of the Sastras, घोरम् *ghoram :* horrible (both for themselves and other beings), तपः *tapah :* austerity, तप्यन्ते *tapyante :* practice, तान् *tan :* them, आसुरानिश्चयान् *asurani-schayan :* to be of demonical resolve, विद्धि *viddhi :* know.

Substance : Those who torture the aggregate of the elements (senses) in the body, (and thereby) torture even Me dwelling within the vehicle of the body, who are possessed by pretension and pride, combined with lust, longing, and animal strength, who practise austerities horrible (to themselves and other beings) contrary to the ordinances of the *Sastras*, devoid of understanding—know such men to be of demonical resolve.

Commentary : *Asastravihitam* : The Gita insists an adherence to the *Sastras* for spiritual advancement. Austerities which are prohibited by the *Sastras* should not be undertaken. They are only *Tamasic* and *Rajasic* types of *Tapas* frightful and horrid to themselves and other beings. Such inhuman forms of austerity show that these men are devoid of understanding.

Tapyante ye tapojanah : The true purpose of *Tapas* is the purification of the mind and not the torturing of the body. The evil tendencies of the mind should no doubt be burnt up before spiritual illumination dawns on man. But cruel mortification of the flesh is not sanctioned by the *Sastras* as a means to self-purification.

Kamaragabalanvithah : Worldly power and physical powers count for nothing without Divine strength. Such men who are devoid of the Godly spirit in them are *Asuras*, whatever other qualities they may possess. Lust and longing for sensual pleasures wither away the Divine elements in man. The Divine is covered up by foul and filthy passions and impulses. Therefore those who seek for spiritual illumination should annihilate these demonical qualities and take to devotion and knowledge from which flows divine strength and power.

Karsayantath bhutagramam : Those who wither away the body and sense-organs by fasting are of *Asuric* nature. Of course, fasting for the sake of bodily health and on holy days for acquiring self-discipline are good. But the law of moderation should not be violated (*yuktahara viharasya*). Beyond a certain limit, fasting becomes cruelty to the body and the senses. This will not take man to the goal. One cannot kill the snake by striking the bush. The real enemy to be destroyed is the impurity of the mind, and this cannot be done by torturing the body. One has to be extremely cautious in this matter. *Tapas* is an act of self-discipline and ego-annihilation. To boast of one's own capacities, to go without food and rest, or to perform physical gymnastics by keeping the heels in the air and the head on the ground, may show off his physical endurance, but is

not a mark of devotinn or *jnana*. Fasting and other forms of self-discipline are . led to keep the body and senses under control, so that they may not impede man's progress towards the Divine. They are means to this end and are not ends in themselves. The way of *Yoga* is moderation. Horrible forms of torturing the body are *Tamasic* austerity.

Mam chaiva anthah sarirastham : The Lord is dwelling within the body. So torturing the body is torturing the Lord Himself. The man who feels the presence of the Lord in all the limbs and senses, will not willingly injure them by demonical self-mortification. Of course, the Lord being the witness only is not affected by what happens to the body whether it is nourished or tortured. But from the point of view of the individual, it is injury to the Lord. That is why men are called upon to practice '*ahimsa*'—non-injury to all beings, because the Lord is present in all beings. The same truth applies to one's own person. Self-torture is thus '*himsa*' of the Lord Himself. It is clearly declared here that nothing truly spiritual could be achieved by these *Tamasic* austerities. In fact, the Asuras, hen they practice these austerities, do so, not for God-realisation, but for gaining some miraculous powers and personal enjoyments in this world or in other world. This aim is *Kama* and *Raga*, the thirst for sense-gratification. Thus the aim of these men of demonical nature is entirely different. The real seekers should cultivate pure Sattvic virtues, discriminate between the real and unreal, seperate the five sheaths, and realise *Paramatma* in themselves.

Question : *What is the nature of the Asuric type of people ?*

Answer : (1) They are subject to pride, self-conceit and pretension; (2) They are possessed by lust and attachment; (3) They have no discrimination; (4) They torture the body and the senses and so they torture the in-dwelling Lord.

The Lord explains the nature of the threefold types of ***food, yajna, tapas and dana.***

7. आहारस्त्वपि सर्वस्य त्रिविधो भवति प्रियः ।
यज्ञस्तपस्तथा दानं तेषां भेदमिमं शृणु ॥ ७

Aharastvapi sarvasya trividho bhavati priyah ।
yajnas tapas tatha danam tesham bhedam imam srinu । 7

Meaning : आहारस्त्वपि *aharah tvapi :* and also food, सर्वस्य *sarvasya :* of all people, त्रिविधः *trividhah :* threefold (Sattvic, Rajasic and Tamasic), प्रियः भवति *priyah bhavati :* is dear, तथा *tatha :* so also, यज्ञः *yajnah :* sacrifice, तपः *tapah :* austerity, दानं *danam :* charity, तेषां *tesham :* of them, इमं भेदम् *imam bhedam :* this distinctions, शृणु *srinu :* hear.

Substance : The food dear to each of the three types of men is also threefold; so also, sacrifice, austerity and charity. Now hear their difference.

Commentary : It is to be noted that the Lord first takes up the threefold kinds of food dear to the three types of men. In spiritual *sadhana*, food is of very great importance, because the mind is formed by the food that is taken. Pure food developes the pure mind, and the pure mind easily grasps the spiritual truth. So all the seekers should be extremely careful about their food.

The Sattvic food :

8. आयुः सत्त्वबलारोग्यसुखप्रीतिविवर्धनाः ।
रस्याः स्निग्धाः स्थिरा हृद्या आहाराः सात्त्विकप्रियाः ॥ ८

Ayuh sattva balarogya sukha priti vivardhanah ।
rasyah snigdhah sthira hridya aharah sattvikapriyah ॥ 8

Meaning : आयुः सत्त्वबलारोग्य सुख प्रीति विवर्धनाः *ayuh sathvaba larogyasukha pritivivardhanah:* those which augment life vitality, purity, strength, health, joy,cheerfulness and good appetite, रस्याः *rasyah :* savoury, स्निग्धाः *snigdhah :* oleaginous, स्थिराः *sthirah :* substantial, हृद्याः *hridyah :* aggreeable, आहाराः *aharah :*

food, सात्त्विक प्रियाः *sattvikapriyah :* (are) dear to the Sattvic type of people.

Substance : Foods which augment life, purity, strength joy and cheerfulness, which are savoury, oleaginous, substantial and agreeable, are dear to the *Sattvic* type of men.

Commentary : The *Sattvic* nature relishes only pure and agreeable food, as described in this verse. Food has a direct bearing on spiritual life. It is not a negligible matter as some indulgent people imagine. It should be within the experience of everyone that when impure and offensive food is taken the mind immediately reacts by generating sensual tendencies, irritability, anger etc. If men take a little more care about their food and its regulation, not only will they be more healthy and happy, but they will also gain insight into the subtler truths of the spiritual realm. Such being the importance of food, the Lord first prescribes the type of food which is dear to the *Sattvic* type of men.

Question : *What is the nature of Sattvic food ?*

Answer It augments life, vitality, purity, health, joy and cheerfulness; It is savoury, oleaginous, substantial and agreeable. The wise should take this type of food.

The Rajasic type of food :

9. कट्वम्ललवणात्युष्णतीक्ष्णरूक्षविदाहिनः ।
आहारा राजसस्येष्टा दुःखशोकामयप्रदाः ॥ ९

Katwamla lavanatyushna tikshna ruksha vidahinah ।
ahara rajasasye'sta duhkha sokamaya pradah ॥ 9

Meaning : कटुव *katu :* bither, आम्ल *amla :* sour, लवण *lavana :* saline, अत्युष्ण *atyushna :* excessively hot, तीक्ष्ण *tikshna :* pungent, रूक्ष *ruksha :* dry, विदाहिनः *vidahinah :* burning, causing thirst, दुःख शोकामयप्रदाः *duhkhasokamaya-pradah :* productive of pain, sorrow and disease, आहाराः

aharah : foods, राजसस्य *rajasasya :* to the Rajasic men, इष्टाः *ishtah :* (are) dear.

Substance : Foods which are bitter, sour, saline, excessively hot, pungent, dry and causing thirst, which produce pain, sorrow and disease, are dear to the *Rajasic* type of men.

Commentary : Such is the food relished by the *Rajasic* people. The effect of such food is immediately felt by pain in the body and consequent mental discomfort. The word *'ati'* is applied to all the adjectives used, by some commentators. Sour, bitter, and burning food-stuffs should be abandoned, if spiritual progress is to be kept up by the *Sadhaka.*

In the eighteenth Discourse (in the thirty eighth verse) the Lord explains that *Rajasic* happiness appears to be pleasing in the beginning but turns out to be extremely painful in the end. Similarly hot and sour food may be relishing to some palates, but they produce grievous discomfort, pain and disease. in the end .This is experienced by many in every day life. Besides, *Rajasic* food disturbs *Dhyana Sadhana.* The mind becomes distracted and agitated and so it cannot remain steady in contemplation. Among the animals, lions, tigers and wolves are restless and foul, whereas cows, goats and others of their kind are calm and non-injurious.

amavapradah : *Rajasic* food produces disease. What can man achieve with a disease-sticken body ? He has neither worldly nor spiritual welfare. So the seekers should abandon all such varieties of food and strive in everyway to keep the body light, pure and strong. The choice of food is in itself a part of self-discipline and an important aspect also. We find real *Sadhakas* extremely fastidious about their food. They take food and water at regular intervals, and do not load the stomach at all odd times with all odd food-stuffs. Such discipline goes a long way to secure self-control easily and these men rise to higher planes of spiritual experience. That should be the standard to be followed by all earnest seekers.

Question : *What is the nature of Rajasic food ?*

Answer : It is bitter, sour, hot, pungent, dry and burning. It causes pain, discomfort and disease. Realising the evil effects of such food, the real seekers should abandon it completely.

The Tamasic type of food —

10. यातयामं गतरसं पूति पर्युषितं च यत् ।
उच्छिष्टमपि चामेध्यं भोजनं तामसप्रियम् ॥ १०

Yatayamam gatarasam puti paryushitam cha yat ।
ucchistam api cha'medhyam bhojanam tamasapriyam । 10

Meaning : यातयामम् *yatayamam:* stale food, or badly cooked food, गतरसम् *gatarasam :* dried, tasteless, पूति *puti :* putrid, पर्युषितं च *paryushitam cha :* and rotten being kept over-night, उच्छिष्टं अपि *ucchishtam api :* and remnants after being eaten by others, अमेध्यं *amedhyam :* impure (not offered to the Lord), यत् *yat :* which, भोजनम् *bhojanam :* food, (asti : is) (tat : that), तामसप्रियं *tamasapriyam :* (is) to the liking of the Tamasic.

Substance : That which is stale (having been cooked a long time before it is taken), dry, putrid and rotten, refuse and impure, (that food) is to the liking of the *Tamasic.*

Commentary : Even according to the principles of health such food is bad. Not only does it damage the system corrupting the blood but it unhinges the mind also. The mind is made of the subtle elements of the body Therefore for physical health and joy, only *Sattvic* food should be taken.

The Sattvic Yajna :-

11. अफलाकाङ्क्षिभिर्यज्ञो विधिदृष्टो य इज्यते ।
यष्टव्यमेवेति मनः समाधाय स सात्त्विकः ॥ ११

Aphalakankhibhir yajno vidhidrishto ya ijyate ।
yastavyam eve'ti manah samadhaya sa sattvikah । 11

Meaning : यष्टव्यम् एव *ishtavyam eva :* verily, ought to be offered, इति *iti :* thus, मनः *manah :* mind, समाधाय *samadhaya :* having decided, विधिदृष्टः *vidhidrishtah :* as enjoined by the Sastras, यः यज्ञः *yah yajnah :* which sacrifice, अफलाकाङ्क्षिभिः *aphalakamkshibhih :* (performed) by men desiring no fruit, इज्यते *ijyate :* is offered, सः *sah :* that (yajna), सात्त्विकः *sattvikah:* (is) Sattvic.

Substance : That *Yajna* is *Sattvic* which is performed by men desiring no fruit, as enjoined by the *Sastras*, with their mind fixed on the *Yajna* only for its own sake.

Commentary : The Lord has already laid down the law that the *Sastras* are the authority about what ought to be done or what ought not to be done. Therefore it is said here that the *Yajna* should be '*vidhidrishtah*'. More over it should be decided after deep consideration whether to perform the sacrifice or not, according to time, place and other circumstances. Above all this, it should be performed without any selfish motive. It should be an act of *Nishkama karmayoga*. Such *Yagna* is called *Sattvic*. Here the word '*Yajna*' does not mean sacrifice of animals and other living beings. It refers to all charitable and beneficient acts of a divine character. Any good done in that spirit becomes a *Yajna.*

Manah samadhaya : It is imperative that the act to be performed should be carefully considered, decided, and fixed before doing it. Otherwise, the wavering mind creates hundred doubts and fears at the time of performing it. Such actions do not bear any good fruit at all. They are sometimes half done and left incomplete. The doer gains no peace or satisfaction from such works. So one should consider the pros and cons, satisfy himself about the *Sastraic* laws, take the advice of the elders and well-wishers, and then only go into action. Such work is *Sattvic* and yields the best rewards to the doer and to the world. The point is that there should not be any longing to

taste the fruits of work. They should be offered to the Lord. Such work is the highest and the noblest.

Question : *What is the nature of the Sattvic Yajna ?*

Answer : It is performed without desire for the fruit. It is performed according to the ordinances of the Scriptures. It is well-considered and clearly decided by the mind.

The Rajasic Yajna :—

12. अभिसंधाय तु फलं दम्भार्थमपि चैव यत् ।
इज्यते भरतश्रेष्ठ तं यज्ञं विद्धि राजसम् ॥ १२

Abhisandhaya tu phalam dambhartham api chai'va yat
ijyate bharatasrestha tam yajnam viddhi rajasam । 12

Meaning : भरत श्रेष्ठ *bharatasreshtha :* O best of the Bharatas ! फलं *phalam :* fruit, अभिसंधाय तु *abhisandhaya tu :* verily seekinkg for, दम्भार्थ मपि चैव *dambhartham apicha eva :* and also for ostentation only, यत् *yat :* what, इज्यते *ijyate :* is performed, तम् यज्ञं *tam yajnam :* that Yajna, राजसम् *rajasam :* Rajasic, विद्धि *viddhi :* know.

Substance : O Arjuna ! that *Yajna* which is performed with desire for fruit, and which is done only for the sake of ostentation, know that to be *Rajasic.*

Commentary : The principle of *Nishkamakarma* is once again emphasised here. The *Rajasic* man performs these sacrifices with a view to get some worldly reward. And also, he hopes to win name and fame by such acts of merit. Thus the *Yajna* loses its purity and divinity by the attachment and pretension of the doer. Any work if it should yield spiritual benefit should be done free from desire and free from pride and self-conceit. The *Rajasic* spirit should be annihilated. Then the same work becomes *Sattvic.*

Question : *What is the nature of the Rajasic Yajna ?*

Answer : It is performed for the sake of some reward, and only for the sake of ostentation, pride and self-conceit.

The Tamasic Yajna is described —

13. विधिहीनमसृष्टान्नं मन्त्रहीनमदक्षिणम् ।
श्रद्धाविरहितं यज्ञं तामसं परिचक्षते ॥ १३

Vidhihinam asrishtannam mantrahinam adakshinam ।
sraddhavirahitam yajnam tamasam parichakshate ॥ 13

Meaning : विधिहीनं *vidhihinam :* without scriptural ordinance, असृष्टान्नं *asrishtannam :* without distribution of food, मन्त्रहीनम् *mantrahinam :* without Mantras, अदक्षिणम् *adakshinam :* without gifts of money, cloths etc., श्रद्धाविरहितं *sraddhavirahitam :* devoid of faith, यज्ञं *yajnam :* yajna, तामसं *tamasam :* Tamasic, परिचक्षते *parichakshate :* (they) declare.

Substance : *Yajna* performed without scriptural ordinance, without distribution of food, without Mantras, without gifts of money and cloths to the poor, devoid of faith, is declared to be *Tamasic* (*Yajna*).

Commentary : *Asrishtannam* : Distribution of food to the hungry and the needy is an important aspect of practical *Vedanta*. In this is implied the grand truth of the Lord's presence in all beings. It is *Vedanta* brought down to the plane of practical work in the world. That is why the elders have prescribed distribution of food as an important item on all auspicious and holy occasions. Poor-feeding, respectful offering of food to deserving people, is an aspect of spiritual *Sadhana*, if its spirit is properly understood and kept in mind. So a sacrifice where there is no offering of food is only the lowest *Tamasic yajna*.

Adakshinam : Offering of money and gifts to the Ritviks and poor people is another feature of a well-performed *yajna*. The sacrificer ought to give away a part of his wealth to the

needy. It is *Tyaga* implied in *Yajna*. That which is done without the real spirit of sacrifice is indeed *Tamasic Yajna*.

Sraddhavirahitam : Any work yields the best reward only when it is done with faith, devotion and complete self-surrender to God. In the twentyeighth verse of this Discourse, the Lord declares that any act of merit done without faith is as good as not having been done at all. Faith is the vital element in all good works. *Yajna* performed without faith is *Tamasic*. It is as good as a dead thing because it is devoid of the life-force of faith.

Question : *What is the nature of Tamasic Yajna ?*

Answer : It is not sanctioned by the *Sastras*. There is no distribution of food. Gifts are not offered. There are no *Mantras*. There is no faith. Such is *Tamasic Yajna*.

The threefold austerity (tapas) is explained here. First the austerity pertaining to the body as it is practised by the Sattvic is taken up—

14. देवद्विजगुरुप्राज्ञपूजनं शौचमार्जवम् ।
ब्रह्मचर्यमहिंसा च शारीरं तप उच्यते ॥ १४

Deva dvija guru prajna pujanam saucham arjavam ।
brahmacharyam ahimsa cha sariram tapa uchyate ॥ 14

Meaning : देवद्विज गुरु प्राज्ञपूजनं *devadvijaguruprajnapujanam :* worship of the Devas, the twice-born, the Guru, the wise, शौचं *saucham :* purity, आर्जवम् *arjavam :* freedom from crookedness in thought word and deed, ब्रह्मचर्यम् *brahmacharyam :* celibacy, अहिंसा च *ahimsa cha :* and non-injury, शारीरं *sariram :* of the body, तपः *tapah :* austerity, उच्यते *uchyate :* is said.

Substance : Worship of the Gods, the twice-born, and the wise (*Mahatmas* and *Jnanis*), purity (internal and external), straight-forwardness charmony in thought, word and deed), celibacy, non-injury- these constitute the austerity of the body.

Commentary: Verses 14, 15 and 16, which deal with the restraint and discipline of the body, speech, and mind, are of the greatest importance for all seekers. They should practise the three-fold austerity, and attain perfect purity of body, speech and mind. Such purity at once leads to self-realisation.

Tapas is intended to purify the body and mind through which the individual has to function and strive for *Atmajnana*. Unless the body is purified internally and externally, the highest knowledge cannot be experienced. The word *Tapas* is generally associated with severe self-denial and self-mortification. People think that *Tapas* is suffering in heat and cold, abstaining from food, standing on one leg or keeping hands uplifted, and such other feats of physical endurance. Such horror – producing practices are not at all mentioned by the Lord. No one need be terrified by that word *tapas*. The Lord's interpretation is practical and within the easy reach of any seeker who is striving for *Atmajnana*. Men and women can practise it. So, it is the duty of all sincere aspirants to undertake the discipline mentioned here and attain the goal.

The austerity of the body consists in five clear practices, (1) Reverence towards and worship of elders, *Mahatmas*, and devotees. By such worship two great rewards are reaped by the worshipper. He acquires their grace and his egoism vanishes. Spiritual development is not possible without the grace of God, *Guru* and *Mahatmas*. *Maya* does not easily give way for man to cross over. The obstacles cannot be cleared without their grace. So the real seeker should win their blessing by humility and reverence, by service and devotion, by worship and selfless service. Their grace is infinitely helpful for man. He becomes humble, wise, unselfish and the super-obstacle the Ego lets go its strangle-hold on the heart of man. That is why the Lord mentioned such worship as the first type of austerity for the body.

Dvijah: (The twice-born) - Twice - born means that man after he acquires *Atmajnana* takes a new birth quite distinct from the body and mind with which he was born. It is indeed a

second birth, for, having attained *Atma Jnana* he discards the former life of the senses and the mind as alien to his true nature. Such men are twice-born. They reflect the glory and majesty, light and perfection of *Paramatma*. They are Divine in human form.

Prajna: (One who has '*prajna*' i. e. a *Jnani*) '*Prajnanam Brahma*'– that is the *Upanishadic* declaration. It is the essence of *Brahmam*, it is knowledge supreme, and the man who possesses it is *prajna* (knower of *Brahmam*). Worship of such *jnanis* is declared to be the austerity of the body.

Saucham: Mental purity, bodily purity, and purity of the surroundings are all necessary. Impurities of the body not only produce diseases but also weakens the mind and makes it incapable of ascent into higher spiritual regions. And to the impure even the idea of a higher life does not occur. Therefore the *sadhaka* should clean the surroundings, purify the body by regular bathing and good food, and clean the mind by rejecting all sensual thoughts and feelings, and by associating it with the Divine.

Arjavam: Every one should cultivate harmony between thought, word and deed. This is integrity. Crookedness like the crawling reptiles is the sign of a poisonous heart filled with selfish and cruel motives. When the three functional modes of thought, word and deed are straight and harmonious, man is said to follow truth, and truth is the open gateway to Self-realisation.

Brahmacharyam: The Lord says that the vow of celibacy in thought, word and deed is the highest *tapas*. It means perfect non-attachment with the objective world, freedom from lustful thoughts, passions and acts, and meditation on the Supreme *Brahmam*. Celibacy is the foundation for all other *Sadhanas*. Therefore its importance is several times mentioned in the Gita. It is like the main-switch for the entire illumination in the spiritual realm.

Ahimsa : (Non-injury to any creature in thought word and deed)–Ignorance of Truth is injury to one's own self. So man should acquire knowledge of what he really is, what this world is, and who the ruler and controller of this universe is. By this understanding, man frees himself from constant self-injury. It is needless to say that injuring other being is strictly prohibited by the *Sastras*. Such harmful thoughts and acts are a negation of the basic truth of the Lord's presence in all beings.

Question : *What is the austerity of the body* ?

Answer : (1) Reverence and worship of the *Devas*, *Gurus* and *Brahmanishthas*, (2) purity of body and mind, (3) integrity, (4) continence, (5) non-injury – these five constitute *Tapas* of the body.

The austerity of speech–

15. अनुद्वेगकरं वाक्यं सत्यं प्रियहितं च यत् ।
स्वाध्यायाभ्यसनं चैव वाङ्मयं तप उच्यते ॥ १५

Anudvegakaram vakyam satyam priyahitam cha yat ।
svadhyayabhyasanam chai'va vangmayam tapa uchyate । 15

Meaning : अनुद्वेगकरं *anudvegakaram* : causing no excitement in others, सत्यं *satyam* : truthful, प्रियहितं च *priyahitam cha* : pleasing and helpful, वाक्यं *vakyam* : speech, स्वाध्यायाभ्यसनं चैव *svadhyayabhyasanam chai va* : and also the study of the scriptures, यत् *yat* : which (tat : that), वाङ्मयं *vangmayam* : pertaining to speech, तपः *tapah* : austerity, उच्यते *uchyate* : is called.

Substance : Speech which does not excite others, which is truthful, delighting and beneficial, and the study of the *Vedas*, *Upanishads*, and *Puranas* are called the austerity of speech.

Commentary : *Anudvegakaram vakyam* : Speech should conform to the four principles enunciated here. First, it should not excite, trouble or injure others. It should be gentle and peaceful.

Secondly, it should be truthful; thirdly, it should be beneficial on all side. This four-way test of speech is a most important aspect of social conduct. One may speak the truth but it may be harsh, painful and exciting. So even in speaking truth, the words chosen and the manner should be pleasing and delightful. This is the *Tapas* of speech.

Svadhyayabhyasanam : The need for practising the study of the *Sastras*, is emphasised here. Everyday some parts or portions of the *Vedas*, *Upanishads* and the *Puranas* should be read. This is a clear reply to those who question—"Meditation is important, why all this study?" of course, Meditation is important, but during the intervals, the aspirant should take to the studies of the *Sastras* to clarify his ideas and keep up the fire of inspiration. *Svadhyaya* is like the wind to the fire of meditation. By truthfulness, and *Svadhyaya*, speech acquires mysterious power. What is spoken even casually comes out true in actual life.

Question : *What is the austerity of speech* ?

Answer : Unexciting, trutful, delighting and beneficial speech, and the study of the *Vedas*, *Upanishads* and the *Puranas*, are called austerity of speech.

The austerity of mind is explained.

16. मनः प्रसादः सौम्यत्वं मौनमात्मविनिग्रहः ।
भावसंशुद्धिरित्येतत्तपो मानसमुच्यते ॥ १६

Manahprasadah saumyatvam maunam atmavinigrahah ।
bhavasamsuddhir ity etat tapo manasam uchyate । 16

Meaning : मनः प्रसादः *manah prasadam* : serenity of mind, (keeping it untroubled, unexcited), सौम्यत्वं *saumyatvam* : pleasing expression (free from cruelty, treachery ill–will etc.) मौनं *maunam:* silence (i. e.) the silence of the mind by meditation on God, accompanied with silence of words, आत्मविनिग्रहः *atmavinigrahah* : self-control, भावसंशुद्धिः *bhavasam –*

suddhih : purity of mind, इति *iti :* thus, एतत् *etat :* this, मानसं *manasam :* of the mind, तपः *tapah :* austerity, उच्यते *uchyate :* is called.

Substance : Keeping the mind serene (untroubled and unexcited), pleasing facial expression (without ill-will or cruelty), silence (meditation on God), self-control, purity of thought and feeling are called the austerity of the mind.

Commentary : *Manah prasadah :* The mind should be clear, calm, and light. If *Tamoguna* dominates, it is dull, heavy, and morose. If *Rajoguna* dominates, it is troubled, distracted and unbalanced. So the seeker has to cultivate *Sattvaguna*, and keep the mind in that calm serene state. The aim should be to prevent the disturbing elements, dark passions (impure Samskaras) from taking root in the mind. This can be achieved by unfailing devotion and clear knowledge which leads to dispassion. Serenity of mind implies internal purity. This practice consciously undertaken and kept up continuously is what is called austerity of the mind.

Saumyatvam : Face is the index of the mind. The fleeting thoughts and passions of mind cast shadows in the face. Anger, hatred, lust, fear, greed – all these darken and twist the countenance into worried states, most unpleasant for others to see. When the mind is serene and peaceful, the face is bright and delightful. The seekers should examine themselves how far they could keep up the cheerfulness of spirit, and produce an impression of joy and love. It should be clearly noted that a gloomy and forbidding face is not a mark of spiritual advancement. On the other hand, we find the *Mahatmas* beaming with joy, cheerful and humourous, radiating that indefinable joy and knowledge all around.

Maunam : Silence is of two kinds – (1) restraining external sounds; (2) stillness of the inner organ (mind). Here silence of the mind is mentioned. The first is of great importance as a means to achieve the second. Of course, mere stopping the external organ is useless when the mind it distracted by hundreds

of worldly thoughts. In that case, external silence comes under "*Midhyachara*". The aim is to acquire perfect stillness of mind, and detachment from the objective world. Therefore the Lord speaks of *Mouna* as austerity of mind and not of the body. So one should understand that internal silence is the aim and restraint of speech is a means to that end.

Atmavinigrahah : Here the word '*atma*' means the mind and senses. Restraining the mind from running after worldly pleasures is *Tapas* in the highest sense of the word. The word '*vinigrahah*' implies that the mind should be fully controlled, so that there cannot be any trace of attachment to objects. So also, '*bhavasamsuddhi*' implies perfect purity of thought and feeling. Not a speck of dirt should there be in the mind. Such mental purity reflects '*Atma*' clearly, as the sun is clearly reflected in a calm lake of pure water.

Question : *What is the austerity of mind ?*

Answer : Serenity, delightful countenance, stillness of mind (stilled in meditation on Paramatma)—these constitute austerity of mind.

The Lord explains the threefold austerity of the three types of men – first the Sattvic.

17. श्रद्धया परया तप्तं तपस्तत्त्रिविधं नरैः ।
अफलाकाङ्क्षिभिर्युक्तैः सात्त्विकं परिचक्षते ॥ १७

Sraddhaya paraya taptam tapas tat trividhim naraih
aphalakankshibhir yuktaih sattvikam parichakstate 17

Meaning : अफलाकाङ्क्षिभिः *aphalakamkshibhih :* desiring no fruit, युक्तैः *yuktaih :* single-minded in Divine contemplation, नरैः *naraih :* by men, परया *paraya :* highest, श्रद्धया *sraddhaya :* with faith, तप्तं *taptam :* practised, तत् *tat :* that, त्रिविधम् *trividham :* threefold, तपः *tapah :* austerity, सात्त्विकं ***sattvikam :* Sattvic,** परिचक्षते ***parichakshate :*** (they) **declare.**

Substance : The threefold austerity (mentioned above of body, mind and speech) performed by men desiring no fruit, with the highest faith, and with single-minded devotion, is declared to be *Sattvic.*

Commentary : *Sraddhaya* : The attribute *paraya* indicates that supreme faith is needed in the performance of *Tapas.* Otherwise, common failures and well known obstacles in the way, might shake the will of the seeker and make him unfit for further effect. Highest faith in the Supreme is needed. When once the final goal is accepted and fixed in the mind, no obstacle can shake him from the path of spiritual advancement. He marches onwards and onwards, unmindful of failures and backslidings, till the light is revealed.

Yuktaiah : The seeker should unite himself with *Atma* and keep away from all worldly objects. Such people are every conscious of their true Self, and so they are serene and calm whatever may be the troubles and temptations of life.

Naraiah : Of all beings, man is the highest, because *Moksha* is possible for the human being and to no other species. The Lord does not make any distinction among men. All human beings, whatsoever caste, creed or race they belong to, are qualified for the highest state by austerity, self-control, and knowledge.

From this verse, we understand that austerity of the *Sattvic* type requires three conditions. The aspirant should possess immovable faith; he should not have any desire for rewards; he should unite himself with *Paramatma* by an act of will. Fulfilling these conditions, if a man performs the triple austerity of the body, mind and speech, he attains the highest goal.

Question : *What is Sattvic austerity ?*

Answer : Performing the triple austerity of body, mind, and speech, with faith, desiring no fruit and with harmonised mind is called *Sattvic Tapas.*

The Rajasic austerity :

18. सत्कारमानपूजार्थं तपो दम्भेन चैव यत्।
क्रियते तदिह प्रोक्तं राजसं चलमध्रुवम् ॥ १८

Satkara mana pujartham tapo dambhena chai'va yat ।
kriyate tad iha proktam rajasam chalam adhruvam । 18

Meaning : सत्कार मान पूजार्थं *satkaramanapujartham :* with the object of gaining name, honour and reverence, दम्भेन च एव *dambhena cha eva :* and also hypocritically, यत् *yat :* which, तपः *tapah :* austerity, क्रियते *kriyate :* is perpormed, तत् *tat :* that, चलम् *cholam :* unstable, अध्रुवम् *adhruvam :* transitory, राजसं *rajasam :* Rajasic (austerity), इह *iha :* in this world, प्रोक्तम् *proktam :* is said.

Substance : That austerity which is practised hypocritically with the object of gaining reputation, honour, and reverance in this world, is said to be *Rajasic*; it is unstable and transitory.

Commentary : This is spiritual pretension which does not yield any good fruit at all, because the performer does it insincerely for show, and for gaining good name and reverence in society. It is hypocrisy and cheating the world. Such men are not truthful to themselves, and so their austerity is unstable and of short duration. The true aspirant has nothing to gain from name and fame in the world. His worship is sincere and deeply felt as an act of self-fulfilment.

Question : *What is Rajasic austerity ?*

Answer : Austerity performed for the sake of gaining good reputation, honour and reverence in society, and which is performed for show is called Rajasic.

Question : *What is its effect ?*

Answer : It is unstable (i. e.) it is given up when the performer thinks that no worldly distinction is gained by it.

The Tamasic austerity :—

19. मूढग्राहेणात्मनो यत्पीडया क्रियते तपः ।
परस्योत्सादनार्थं वा तत्तामसमुदाहृतम् ॥ १९

Mudhagrahena'tmano yat pidaya kriyate tapah ।
parasyo'tsadanartham va tat tamasam udahritam । 19

Meaning : यत् तपः *yat tapah* : which austerity, मूढग्राहेण *mudhagrahena* : out of foolish resolution, आत्मनः पीडया *atmanah pidaya* : with self-torture, परस्य *parasya* : of another, उत्सादनार्थं वा *utsadanartham va* : or for the destruction, क्रियते *kriyate* : is performed, तत् *tat* : that, तामसम् *tamasam* : Tamasic, उदाहृतम् *udahritam* : is said.

Substance : That austerity which is practised with a foolish obstinacy, with self-torture or for the destruction of another, is said to be *Tamasic*.

Commentary : *Mudhagrahena*: Determination is no doubt good, but it should be right and wisely set up. Otherwise it results in self-destruction or in the destruction of others.

Atmanah pidaya : The Lord has already said that torturing the body is the sign of a demonical nature. Fasting, silence and other vows should be adopted after due consideration and discrimination. Otherwise, they turn out to be harmful and injurious to one's own self. And, austerity undertaken for the purpose of destroying another is most objectionable. *Tapas* is a means for self-realisation, and to use it for injuring and killing others should be strongly condemned. It is *Asuric* nature. It is due to dark ignorance and evil passions. The seekers should abandon them completely, and take up the *Sattvic* austerity, practise it sincerely, and reach the goal.

This verse is a warning to all those who tread the path of *Tapas*; (1) There should not be any foolish obstinacy and hasty resolution regarding the austerity practises; (2) No one should torture the body and cause injury to one's self by horried practices of self-mortifications; (3) No austerity should be undertaken for injuring other beings. It is the very negation of all spiritual ideals.

Question : *What is the nature of Tamasic austerity* ?

Answer : That which is performed with foolish obstinacy by self-torture and for the purpose of destroying others is called *Tamasic* austerity.

The three-fold charity is explained–first the Sattvic :

20. दातव्यमिति यद्दानं दीयतेऽनुपकारिणे ।
देशे काले च पात्रे च तद्दानं सात्त्विकं स्मृतम् ॥ २०

Datavyam iti yad danam diyate'nupakarine ।
dese kale cha patre cha tad danam sattvikam smritam । 20

Meaning : दातव्यम् *datavyam* : ought to be given, इति *iti* : thus (resolved), यत् दानं *yat danam* : which gift, देशे *dese* : in holy places, काले च *kale cha* : and on auspicious occasions, पात्रे च *patre cha* : and to deserving person, अनुपकारिणे *anupakarine* : who can do no good in return, दीयते *diyate* : is given, तत् *tat* : that, दानं *danam* : charity, सात्त्विकं स्मृतम् *sattvikam smritam* : is held to be Sattvic.

Substance : That charity which is decided "ought to be given", offered to a deserving man from whom no return is expected, in proper time and place, is declared to be *Sattvic*.

Commentary : *Datavyam iti* – Every man should offer charity as a sacred duty, and not for gaining honour and fame in the world. "It is my duty to offer this gift to this man, and therefore I am giving it"–such should be the spirit behind all acts of a beneficient nature. In truth, whatever good we do to others, whatever sacrifice we make for the sake of others, is a good done unto one's own self. So, when we help poor and needy people, let us remember that we are not supporting them, for, the Lord is the support to all, but adding to the pile of our own righteousness which will greatly advance our own spiritual aim.

Anupakarine : Charity offered to persons from whom no return benefit is expected, is the highest. The utterly poor, the blind, the lame, the diseased, the neglected are fit subjects of *charity*. It is done out of sheer compassion, and such feelings soften the heart and enable men to understand the secret of oneness of all beings. Gifts offered to the rich and powerful are vitiated by the secret motive of receiving some benefit from them in due time. Hence it is not an act of spiritual merit.

Dese : Gifts offered in holy places, temples and hermitages are the best. 'Kale'–charity given on auspicious and sacred occasions like the eclipse (*grahanam*) Sankranti, or one's own birthday, or anniversary of elders, is the best.

Patre : The recipient of *charity* should be fit and worthy to receive it. The hungry man at the door is the fittest person for '*annadana*'. So the giver should consider the time, place and the person when he offers charity, and he should give it without expecting anything in return.

Question : *What is Sattvic Charity* ?

Answer : (1) It should be decided upon after due consideration. (2) It should be offered to persons from whom no return is expected. (3) It should be in confirmity with time, place and the fitness of the recipient.

The Rajasic charity:—

21. यत्तु प्रत्युपकारार्थं फलमुद्दिश्य वा पुनः ।
दीयते च परिक्लिष्टं तद्दानं राजसं स्मृतम् ॥ २१

Yat tu pratyupakarartham phalam uddisya va punah ।
diyate cha pariklistam tad danam rajasam smritam ॥ 21

Meaning : प्रत्युपकारार्थं *pratyupakarartham* : with the object of getting some benefit in return, पुनः *punah* : again, फलं *phalam* : fruit, उद्दिश्य वा *uddisya va* : or looking for, परिक्लिष्टं च *pariklishtam cha* : and (giving) reluctantly, यत् तु *yat tu* : which indeed, दीयते *diyate* : is given, तत् दानं *tat danam* : that charity, राजसं *rajasam* : Rajasic, स्मृतम् *smritam* : is called.

Substance : That which is given with a view to receive some benefit in return, or looking for fruit or gain, given reluctantly– that charity is called *Rajasic*.

Commentary : The Lord insists on charity, being pure and uncontaminated by hopes and expectations of return benefit here or hereafter. Such calculated gifts come under some kind of commercial transaction. Such charity is *Rajasic*. Such gifts and presents given to persons do not come under *Dana* at all. It is just a social celebration and no more. What we are concerned with here is spiritual purity and realisation. For, this charity done with true compassion, with a heart overflowing with love, as an end itself, as an act of service to God, who is present in the form of suffering humanity is the highest type.

Pariklishtam : Charity is sometimes done grudgingly. The giver is troubled, that he is loosing his property or valuable things. Or he may be acting under pressure from others. Such charity leads no where. It is suffering both for the giver and the receiver. Charity should be done out of the fulness of heart, with joy and a high sense of duty. All men should practice this type of *Sattvic Dana*.

Question : *What is Rajasic Charity* ?

Answer : (1) It is done with a view to receive something in return (2) It is done to get some reward (3) It is done grudgingly and painfully.

Tamasic charity is explained.

22. अदेशकाले यद्दानमपात्रेभ्यश्च दीयते ।
असत्कृतमवज्ञातं तत्तामसमुदाहृतम् ॥ २२

Adesakale yad danam apatrebhyas cha diyate ।
asatkritam avajnatam tat tamasam udahritam ॥ 22

Meaning : अदेशकाले *adesakale*:on improper occasions and in improper places अपात्रेभ्यश्च *apatrebhyah cha* : and to unworthy people, असत्कृतं *asatkritam* : without respect अवज्ञातं *avajnatam*:

insultingly, यत् दानं *yat danam* : what charity, दीयते *diyate* : is ginen, तत् *tat* : that, तामसम् *tamasam* : Tamasic, उदाहृतम् *udahritam* : is called.

Substance: Charity, which given on unproper occasions and in unproper places, to unworthy persons, without respect, insultingly is declared to be *Tamasic*.

Commentary: Charity (*Dana*) should be offered with respect to the recipients. To throw coins at beggers in the street, abusing and insulting them, is no charity at all. It degrades the giver and the receiver. Such charity defeats its own purpose, because the Lord declares in this Discourse that anything done without '*Sraddha*' is as good as not having been done at all (*asraddhaya hutam dattam — asat ityuchyate*)

Question: *What is Tamasic Charity ?*

Answer : (1) It is done without any consideration of time and place (2) It is given to unworthy persons (3) It is given without respect, insultingly.

The Lord explains the triple designation of Brahman :-

23. ओं तत्सदिति निर्देशो ब्रह्मणस्त्रिविधः स्मृतः ।
ब्राह्मणास्तेन वेदाश्च यज्ञाश्च विहिताः पुरा ॥ २३

*Om tat sad iti nirdeso brahmanastrividhah smritah ।
brahmanas tena vedas cha yajnas cha vihitah pura ॥* 23

Meaning : ब्रह्मणः *Brahmanah* : Of Brahman ! ओं इति *Om iti* : thus Om, तत् *tat* : Tat, सत् *sat* : Sat, त्रिविधः *trividhah* : threefold, निर्देशः *nirdesah* : names and designations, स्मृतः *smritah* : has been declared, तेन *tena* : by that, ब्राह्मणाः *brahmanah* : Brahmanas (Brahmajnanis), वेदाः च *vedah cha* : and Vedas, यज्ञाः च *yajnah cha* : and Yajnas, पुरा *pura* : formerly, विहिताः *vihitah* : created.

Substance : *Om Tat Sat*— this has been declared the triple designation of *Brahman*; by that *Brahmanas*, *Vedas* and *Yajnas* were created formerly.

Commentary : Though *Brahman* has no name and form, yet for the comprehension and worship of the devotees the threefold designation *Om Tat Sat* has been declared. Through these names, *Brahman* the goal is thought of and meditated. Since these three sounds stand for *Brahman*, they contain absolute purity and power, as *Mantra*. In the *Vedas* and the *Sastras*, the *Pranava* and other associated *Mantras* have been explained for the benefit of all spiritual aspirants.

Tasya Vachakah pranavah :

Om is the sound symbol of *Paramatma*.

Tajjapas tadartha Bhavanam (*Patanjali*)

"The name (*Om*) should be uttered repeatedly and its meaning should be deeply contemplated."— If there are any errors and mistakes in the practice of *Karma* (*Yajna*, *Japa*, *Dhyana* etc.) all of them are rectified by the utterance of these three symbols of Brahman *Om Tat Sat*. Therefore, the utterance of *Om* has become the practice at the beginning of any form of *Karma*. Every *Mantra* has the symbol *Om* prefixed to it. But when the symbols *Om Tat Sat* are uttered, their meaning should be kept in mind, and the Supreme Brahman should be meditated through these symbols. All *mantras* acquire power when their meaning and significance are clearly contemplated in the mind.

It is declared that *Vedas* and *Yajnas* were created from this triple designation (*Om Tat Sat*). So it is the origin, the source of the *Vedas*. The very essence of all the *Vedas* is, as it were, distilled into that one symbol '*Om*'. So, the utterance of this sacred syllable is equal to the study of all the *Vedas*.

Another interpretation for *Om Tat Sat-Om* : *Para Brahman*; *Tat* : That (Brahman alone); *Sat* : is (reality) Every-

thing else in the entire objective universe is only a shadow unreal (Mithya). Therefore the *Mantra Om Tat Sat*, implies the very highest truth of all the *Vedas* and the *Sastras—Brahma satyam jagan mithya* (Brahman is real, the universe is unreal). Thus the aspirants should utter this unique *Mantra*, contemplate the reality of Brahman, reject the unreal world, and develop dispassion and knowledge. They should firmly establish themselves in Brahman, the only reality.

Two meanings could be given to *Om Tat Sat* as follows:

1) *Om* : Brahman (is); *Tat* : that (Brahman); *Sat* : Reality;

2) *Tat* : that; *Sat* : Reality; *Om* : (is) Brahman.

Question : *What is the triple designation of Brahman?*

Answer : Om, Tat, Sat.

Question : *What is its power?*

Answer : From that (Brahman) were created Brahmanas (Brahmajnanis), the Vedas, and the Yajnas.

Question : *What therefore is the source of the Vedas etc.?*

Answer : Brahman designated by the sound symbol Om.

24. तस्मादोमित्युदाहृत्य यज्ञदानतपः क्रियाः ।
प्रवर्तन्ते विधानोक्ताः सततं ब्रह्मवादिनाम् ॥ २४

Tasmad om ity udahritya yajna dana tapah kriyah
pravartante vidhanoktah satatam brahmavadinam 24

Meaning : तस्मात् *tasmat* : therefore, ब्रह्मवादिनाम् *brahmavadinam* : of the knowers of Brahman, विधानोक्ताः *vidhanoktah* : declared in the Sastras, यज्ञदान तपः क्रियाः *yajnadana tapah kriyah* : the acts of yajna, dana and tapas, सततं *satatam* : always, ओं *Om* : Om, इति *iti* : thus, उदाहृत्य *udahritya* : uttering, प्रवर्तन्ते *pravartante* : are begun.

Substance : Therefore, the knowers of *Brahman*, always begin the various acts of sacrifice, charity and austerity, enjoined by the *Sastras*, with the utterance of the sacred syllable '*Om*'.

Commentary : The importance of the first syllable '*Om*' is declared here. Knowing the sacredness and power of this single syllable *Om* as the name of *Brahman*, the sages begin every *Karma*, only after uttering it. And at the end of every *Karma* also the syllable *Om* is uttered. Thus, both at the beginning and at the end of every work, the *Parama Mantra* is repeated by the knowers of the *Vedas*. Whatever defects there may be in the work done, by negligence or ignorance, all these are burnt up by the utterance of *Pranava*, and the little that is done, yields the highest reward.

Satatam : The utterance of *Om* is invariably practised by the learned, because they know that *Brahman* as designated by the symbol *Om*, is the Intelligence power that gives truth and substance to all acts of sacrifice, charity austerity etc. Just as the engine by its power draws all the coaches attached to it, just as the number one gives value to all the zeroes that come after it, even so *Om* (*Brahman*) gives life and light to every sacred act performed by man.

Question : *What is the power of Om?*

Answer : The knowers of the Vedas always begin every sacred act by the utterance of OM the Pranava symbol of Brahman.

25. तदित्यनभिसंधाय फलं यज्ञतपः क्रियाः ।
दानक्रियाश्च विविधाः क्रियन्ते मोक्षकाङ्क्षिभिः ॥ २५

Tad ity anabhisamdhaya phalam yajna tapah kriyah
dana kriyas cha vividhah kriyante mokshakankshibhih 25

Meaning : मोक्षकाङ्क्षिभिः *Mokshakankshibhih* : by those who aspire for liberation, तत् *tat* : that (Brahman), इति *iti* : thus, (*udahritya* : uttering), फलं *phalam* : fruit, अनभिसंधाय *anabhisandhaya* : without desiring, विविधाः *vividhah* : various, यज्ञ तपः क्रियाः *yajnatapahkriyah* : acts of Yajna and austerity, दान क्रियाः च *danakriyah cha* : and acts of charity, क्रियन्ते *kriyante* : are performed,

Substance: Uttering *Tat* (the name of *Brahman*) without aiming at fruit, acts of *yajna* and austerity, and also acts of charity are performed by the seekers of *Moksha*.

Commentary: It is declared here that the seekers of liberation, perform acts of sacrifice, charity and austerity, without seeking for their fruit. Thus performed without any longing for personal rewards, these acts purify the mind and pave the way for *Moksha*. The renuciation of the fruits of actions is one of the main tenets of the *Gita*, and it is absolutely the pre-condition for Self-realisation.

Moreover, we understand that the aspirants of *Moksha* should perform all these acts of sacrifice, and charity, while remaining unconcerned about their fruit. These acts are not to be abandoned, because they are helpful to purify the mind, and to reach the goal of liberation. The Lord insists on action as the purifying agent indispensable for spiritual realisation. The same idea is repeated in the next discourse also—

Yajna dana tapah karma
na tyajyam karyam eva tat

Some are of the view that no good acts should be done because even good acts bind man. The teacher of the Gita does not subscribe to this view. On the other hand, He emphasises that good acts should not be abandoned; they should be performed. Therefore, the seekers of liberation should undertake all good actions like sacrifice, charity; austarity etc., purify themselves, and attain *Brahmajnana*.

Question: *How should the seekers of liberation act?*

Answer: Uttering the name of Brahman (OM) they should perform all acts of sacrifice, austerity and charity.

Question: *What about the fruit of action?*

Answer: They do not seek for it.

Question: *So, what is the way to Moksha?*

Answer: Uttering the sacred designation of Brahman (OM Tat Sat) and performing righteous acts of Yajna, dana, etc. without desire for their fruit, is the way to liberation. Having acquired purity by renunciation of the fruits of action, they attain Brahmajnana.

26. सद्भावे साधुभावे च सदित्येतत्प्रयुज्यते ॥
प्रशस्ते कर्मणि तथा सच्छब्दः पार्थ युज्यते । २६

Sadbhave sadhubhave cha sad ity etat prayujyate ।
prasaste karmani tatha sacchabdah partha yujyate ॥ 26

Meaning: पार्थ *partha*: O Arjuna, सद्भावे *sadbhave*: in the sense of reality—'isness', साधु भावेच *sadhubhave cha*: and in the sense of goodness, सत् इति एतद् *sat iti etat*: This as 'sat' (name of Brahman), प्रयुज्यते *prayujyate*: is used, तथा *tatha*: in the same way, प्रशस्ते कर्मणि *prasasti karmani*: in the sense of the highest (most auspicious acts), सत् शब्दः *sat sabdah*: the word 'Sat' युज्यते *yujyate*: is used.

Substance: O Arjuna! the word '*Sat*' is used in the sense of reality (*Brahman*) and of goodness; and so also the word '*Sat*' is used in the sense of an auspicious act.

Commentary: The word '*Sat*' indicates both 'isness' and 'Supremacy.' For example, '*Sat+karma*=good act; *Satbhava*= the idea of Reality.' What is, is *Sat*; what is good is '*Sat*'.

Question: *How is the word 'Sat' used?*

Answer: In the sense of Reality and in the sense of goodness, the word 'Sat' is used. It is also used in the sense of auspicious acts.

27. यज्ञे तपसि दाने च स्थितिः सदिति चोच्यते।
कर्म चैव तदर्थीयं सदित्येवाभिधीयते ॥ २७

Yajne tapasi dane cha sthitih sad iti cho'chyate ।
karma chai'va tadarthiyam sad ity eva 'bhidhiyate ॥ 27

Meaning: यज्ञे *Yajne*: in sacrifice, तपसि च *tapasi cha*: and in austerity, दाने च *dane cha*: and in charity, स्थितिः

sthithi : (reality) steadfastaness, सत् *sat* : Sat, इति *iti* : thus, उच्यते *uchyate* : is called, तदर्थीयं कर्म एव च *tadarthiyam karma eva cha* : and also action performed for the sake of Supreme Brahman, सत् इति एव *sat iti eva* : as Sat even, अभिधीयते *abhidhiyate* : is called.

Substance : Steadfastness in sacrifice, austerity, and charity is also called *Sat*; and an action for the sake of the Supreme *Brahman* (*Tat*) is also named '*Sat*'.

Commentary: The Lord affirms the performance of sacrifice, austerity and charity, again and again. Steadfastness in performing these acts itself is the *Brahman*, designated by the word '*Sat*'. Thus we can imagine the holiness of these acts. They are '*Sat*'. Moreover all auspicious acts done for the sake of the Supreme are also named '*Sat*'. All such acts of inner purification, lead to the same goal-*Brahman* In this manner, *Brahman* whose form is existence (isness) (*Sat*) is to be realised by these acts which are also called '*Sat*'. The condition to be carefully noted is that these acts should be performed for the sake of that *Brahman*, renouncing the fruits to God, and with no motive of personal gain. Then only they are '*Sat*' and lead to *Tat* (That). Otherwise the plane of action does not change. They are just like the hundred and one other actions that are usually done for personal profit and bind them to the wheel of *Samsara*. Action in itself cannot bind. It binds when one is attached to its fruits and desire to enjoy worldly benefit sthrough them. Then they are not '*Sat*', because they are practised for the sake of the world (*Asat*) and not for the sake of *Brahman* (*Sat*). The Lord teaches the Divinity of action in this verse. Knowing this, the seekers of truth should perform the best forms of action like *Yajna*, *Tapas* and *Dana*, with the ultimate aim of realising *Brahman* and attaining perfection and freedom.

Question : *What is the significance of Sat* ?

Answer : Steadfastness in the performance of Yajna, Tapas and Dana, is Sat. All acts performed for the sake of Brahman are Sat. Thus the sages transform every good act into Sat, by renunciating the fruit of action.

Action performed without faith is 'asat'.

28. अश्रद्धया हुतं दत्तं तपस्तप्तं कृतं च यत् ।
असदित्युच्यते पार्थ न च तत्प्रेत्य नो इह ॥ २८

Asraddhaya hutam dattam tapas taptam kritam cha yat ।
asad ity uchyate partha na cha tat pretya no iha ॥ 28

Meaning : पार्थ *partha* : O Arjuna! अश्रद्धया *asraddhaya* : without faith, हुतं *hutam* : what is sacrified, दत्तं *dattam* : (what) is given in charity, तप्तं तपः च *taptam tapah cha* : and austerity performed, कृतं च *kritam cha* : and (other) acts done, यत् *yat* : whatever, (*tat* : that) असत् इति *asat iti* : as 'Asat', उच्यते *uchyate* : is said, तत् *tat* : that, प्रेत्य *pretya* : for hereafter (other worlds after death), न *na* : is not, इह च *iha cha* : and for this world, न *na* : is not.

Substance : O Arjuna! what is sacrified without faith, what is given in charity (without faith) what austerity is performed (without faith) and whatever acts are done (without faith) they are said to be '*asat*'; they do not produce good in this world or in other worlds (after death).

Commentary : Faith (*sraddha*) is the Key-note of success either in worldly life or in spiritual life. Without it nothing is achieved even in small matters concerning every day life. In spiritual life where man tries to ascend to the highest state the need for unswerving faith is greatly emphasised. That is why the Lord insists on faith in many places and He has devoted a whole Discourse to elaborate the theme of faith (*sraddha*). Whatever may be the act performed either *Yajna* or *Dana* or *Tapas*, or other good works, if there is no faith in the heart of the doer, it becomes utterly useless. It does not acquire the status of '*Sat*'. It is just '*Asat*' (i.e.) something equal to zero, something not performed at all. Such acts bring no good either here or hereafter. A person may gather all materials for preparing food, and yet, if the cook has no '*sradha*' in what he is doing, the

whole thing goes to waste. So also, in the spiritual field, whatever other qualities the aspirants may possess, if he is void of faith, his austerities, sacrifices and charities bear no fruit at all. It remains only in the realm of the '*Asat*' and cannot be transformed into '*Sat*'. Therefore it is the duty of all seekers to do their '*sadhana*' with faith and realise the goal. Even a little of such '*sadhana*' with faith will help to realise the Self. And such '*sadhana*' does not at all go in vain. Thus, holding on to faith as the support, propelling force, and the guiding light, man has to march forward towards the ultimate reality, the supreme *Brahman.*

Question : *What will be the effect of Yajna, Dana, and Tapas, if they are performed without faith ?*

Answer : They yield no fruit. They are 'Asat', as acts not performed at all.

Question : *Do they bear fruit in the next world ?*

Answer : No, Neither here nor hereafter do they bring any good.

Question : *What then is man's duty ?*

Answer : Every one should carry on his Sadhana with redoubled confidence and faith, and reach the goal quickly.

इति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे
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श्री भगवद्गीता

SRI BHAGAVAD GITA

अथ अष्टादशोऽध्यायः

Atha Ashtadasodhyayah

EIGHTEENTH DISCOURSE

मोक्षसंन्यास योगः

MOKSHASANNYASA YOGA

THE YOGA OF LIBERATION BY RENUNCIATION

I. Title of the Discourse :

Moksha means liberation, liberation from bondage, liberation from the sorrows and delusions of worldly life, liberation from the wheel of birth and death. Such liberation is attained by renunciation (*tyaga*) only.

Tyagenaike amritatvamanush (*Kaivalyopanishad*)

The words *Tyaga* and *Sannyasa* have both the same meaning and significance. The rejection of attachment for the objective world, detachment from any kind of contact with the world, is *Tyaga*. Renouncing the world, the body and the mind and all such objective phenomena, and taking refuge in *Paramatma* alone, in the Supreme Self, is *Tyaga* The moment when contact with material and objective universe (*Drisya*) is cut off, man attains the state of *Drik* and remains free and perfect. That is the state of *Moksha*. When the *Kshetra* is renounced, the *Kshetrajana* alone exists, when *Drisya* is renounced, the *Drik* alone remains. In any case, the renunciation (*tyaga*) of the phenomenal

whole thing goes to waste. So also, in the spiritual field, whatever other qualities the aspirants may possess, if he is void of faith, his austerities, sacrifices and charities bear no fruit at all. It remains only in the realm of the '*Asat*' and cannot be transformed into '*Sat*'. Therefore it is the duty of all seekers to do their '*sadhana*' with faith and realise the goal. Even a little of such '*sadhana*' with faith will help to realise the Self. And such '*sadhana*' does not at all go in vain. Thus, holding on to faith as the support, propelling force, and the guiding light, man has to march forward towards the ultimate reality, the supreme *Brahman*.

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world with all attachments to it is the way to *Moksha*. As the Discourse explains the principle and practise of liberation through renunciation, it is called *Mokshasannyasa Yoga*.

2. **Another interpretation :**

Moksha is the Supreme Lord; *Sannyasa* means renunciation of all acts along with their fruits to the Lord. Thus *Mokshasannyasa* means the surrendering of all *Karma* and *Karmaphala* to the Supreme Lord.

3. **Another interpretation :—**

Mokshasannyasa means renunciation of *Moksha*. Would anyone renounce *Moksha* ? Are not all men seeking for *Moksha* ? True. But who is it that seeks for *Moksha* ? — the bound soul. The man in bondage seeks for liberation. But, having understood the Lord's magnificient message of freedom and perfection through the Seventeen Discourses, who can remain still a bound soul ? "*Ajonityassasvato'yam purano*"— Thus, knowing the birthless, the deathless, ever-free, ever blissful, omniscient, omnipotent, ever-glorious *Atma*, where is bondage, where is the bound soul ? There is no such entity as the *Jiva*, the bound soul. It is fiction. When the truth is known, the *Jiva* understands that his bondage was a myth, that he was never bound, that freedom and perfection are his true self.

In that state, the idea of liberation is gone, because he has discovered that he was not bound at all at any time, and the idea of seeking for liberation is given up because he is already free.

Or, the Lord Himself confers liberation on his disciple and devotee who has put his faith in Him, and gone through the various forms of discipline explained by Him in the Seventeen Discourses. There is no need for the devotee still to aspire for liberation, because it comes to him spontaneously by the grace of the Lord.

All the *Yogas* fully dealt with in the former Discourses are mentioned here briefly. Other ideas not so far touched are included in this last chapter. So this Discourse may be

described as the essence of the Gita or the epitome of the *Gita Sastra*. Having heard directly from the Lord the highest spiritual teaching, who can remain yet a bound soul ? One can renounce the lingering thought of *Moksha* because he now experiences the bliss of freedom and perfection. So, the title *Moksha sannyasayoga* might have been given to this Discourse.

4. The names of the previous Discourses, like *Karmayoga*, *Bhaktiyoga*, *Jnanayoga* etc., have been so far interpreted as union with *Paramatma* through *Karma* or *Bhakti* or *Jnana* etc. On the same analogy, *Moksha sannyasa yoga* has to be interpreted as union with *Paramatma* through liberation by renunciation. Thus the theme of the Discourse is— (1) *Moksha* is attained by complete renunciation of every kind of contact with the objective world. (2) Give up even the thought of attaining *Moksha*. (3) Surrender all *Karma* with all its fruits to *Paramatma* by an act of *Tyaga*. (4) By Supreme renunciation which is the very essence of *Moksha*, union with *Paramatma* is attained. These teachings form the sum and substance of this Discourse, and so it is entitled *Mokshasannyasa yoga*.

II. Important points of the Discourse :

1) The theme of Tyaga (1–12)
2) Stating the cause for the accomplishment of all *Karma* according to *Samkhya* theory; the non-doership of *Atma* (13–18)
3) Knowledge, action, reason, courage, happiness–their threefold aspects. (*Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas*) (19–40)
4) The duties of the four castes (41–48)
5) The means to attain *Brahmasakshatkara*; *Jnananishta* (49–55)
6) *Nishkama karma* associated with *Bhakti* (56–60)
7) Surrender to the Lord; the essence of the *Gita* (61–66)
8) Sanjaya's adoration for the *Gita* (74–78)

III. How this Discourse is connected with the previous one:

The Lord taught Arjuna different *yogas* in the preceding chapters. Now Arjuna wants to know the essence of all of them, and questions the Lord about the meaning and significance of *Tyaga* and *Sannyasa*. The Discourse starts with Arjuna's question. As this is the last Chapter, the substance of all that has been already said is summed up in it.

अर्जुन उवाच

1. संन्यासस्य महाबाहो तत्त्वमिच्छामि वेदितुम् ।
त्यागस्य च हृषीकेश पृथक्केशिनिषूदन ॥ १

Arjuna uvacha

Sannyasasya mahabaho tattvam icchami veditum ।
tyagasya cha hrishikesa prithak kesinishudana ॥ 1

अर्जुन उवाच *Arjuna uvacha* : Arjuna said.

Meaning : महाबाहो *mahabaho* : O mighty armed Krishna! हृषीकेश *hrishikesa* : controller of the senses! केशिनिषूदन *kesinishudana* : killer of the demon Kesi! संन्यासस्य *sannyasasya* : of Sannyasa, त्यागस्य *tyagasya* : of renunciation, abandonment, तत्त्वं *tattvam* : essence (true meaning), पृथक् *prithak* : separately, वेदितुम् *veditum* : to know, इच्छामि *icchami* : I wish.

Substance : Arjuna said : O mighty armed! I desire to know what *sannyasa* is and what *tyaga* is, in essence. Tell me of them separately O controller of the senses, the slayer of *Kesi*, Krishna!

Commentary : In different contexts in the Gita, the Lord has used the word *Sannyasa* and *Tyaga* several times (3-30; 4-20; 4-41; 9-28; 12-6; 12-11; 12-12; 12-16; 14-25). But the two terms have not been explained distinctly. Hence Arjuna's question.

In the *Upanishads*, the two concepts of *Tyaga* and *Sannyasa* are mentioned as means to liberation.

(1) *Tyagenaike amritattvamanusuh.*

(2) *Sannyasayogad yatayas Suddhasattvah.*

Arjuna addresses the Lord thrice in different ways, revealing his high adoration for the Divine Teacher from whom he is learning the ultimate Truth. Such reverence for the teacher of *Brahmavidya* is essential for attaining spiritual illumination. The respectful questioning of Arjuna is what is known as '*pariprasna*'; The proper way to approach the *Guru*, and place one's doubts before him should be known by the disciple. Being pleased with such faithful devotion and reverence, the teacher showers his grace on the disciple, and unravels the mystery of Divine Realisation.

Question : *What is Arjuna's question?*

Answer : He desired to know from the Lord the distinction between *Sannyasa* and *Tyaga* in their essence.

The Lord's Answer :

श्री भगवानुवाच

2. काम्यानां कर्मणां न्यासं संन्यासं कवयो विदुः ।
सर्वकर्मफलत्यागं प्राहुस्त्यागं विचक्षणाः ॥ २

Sri Bhagavan uvacha

Kamyanam karmanam nyasam
sannyasam kavayo viduh ।
Sarva karma phalatyagam prahus
tyagam vichakshanah ॥ 2

श्री भगवानुवाच *Sri Bhagavan Uvacha* : The blessed Lord said.

Meaning : काम्यानां *kamyanam* : (of) desireful, कर्मणां *karmanam* : of actions, न्यासं *nyasam* : renunciation, संन्यासं *sannyasam* : Sannyasam, कवयः *kavayah* : the sages (Jnanis), विदुः *viduh*: understand, सर्वकर्म फलत्यागं *sarvakarma phalatyagam* : abandoning the fruits of all works, त्यागं *tyagam* : Tyaga, विचक्षणाः *vichakshanah* : the learned, प्राहुः *prahuh* : declare.

Substance : The Blessed Lord said: **(O Arjuna!) the sages understand *Sannyasa*, as the renunciation of all desireful actions; the learned declare *tyaga* as the abandoning of fruits of all works.**

Commentary : The Gita defines *Sannyasa* as the renunciation of desirful actions; and not, going into forests and mountain-caves in search of some unknown thing. The man who renounces actions prompted by personal desire for enjoyment is practically a *sannyasi*, though he lives with his wife and children as a householder. Similarly, the man who abandons the fruits of actions, is a *Tyagi* whatever may be his social position.

Question : *What is Sannyasa* ?

Answer : Renunciation of all desireful actions is Sannyasa.

Question : *What is Tyaga* ?

Answer : Abandoning the fruits of all works is Tyaga.

Difference of view among the learned about the performance of Karma and its non performance is stated.

3. त्याज्यं दोषवदित्येके कर्म प्राहुर्मनीषिणः।
यज्ञदानतपः कर्म न त्याज्यमिति चापरे ॥ ३

*Tyajyam doshavad ity eke karma prahur manishinah ।
yajna dana tapah karma na tyajyam iti cha'pare ॥* 3

Meaning : एके *eke* : some, मनीषिणः *manishinah* : learned people (Samkhyas), दोषवत् *doshavat* : as evil, कर्म *karma* : action, त्याज्यं *tyajyam* : should be abandoned, इति *iti* : thus, आहुः *prahuh* : declare, अपरे *apare* : others, यज्ञदान तपः कर्म *yajnadanatapahkarma* : the acts of sacrifice, austerity, and charity, न त्याज्यं इति च *na tyajyam iti cha* : should not be abandoned and thus, (Prahuh : declare).

Substance : Some philosophers declare that action should be abandoned as an evil; and others (declare) that acts of *yajna*, and *Tapas* should not be abandoned.

Commentary : The *samkhya* philosophers declare that all work (*Karma*) should be abandoned as an evil. They say that work implies the existence of the body, senses, and the mind (*Upadhi*) as the instruments of action. *Atma* is the eternal witness, and hence the *upadhi* is to be discarded as non-existent, and when there is no *upadhi*, no action can take place at all.

Others argue differently. They say that there is no other way except *Karma* to purify the mind. Even bare existence is impossible without *Karma*. So, they declare that righteous work, purifying acts like sacrifice, austerity and charity should be performed. They ought not to be abandoned. Thus there is difference of view about the performance and non-performance of *Karma*. Having stated the difference, the Lord proceeds to give his decisive opinion on this question.

Question : *What is the view of some philosophers about Karma*?

Answer : They (the Samkhyas) say that Karma should be abandoned as an evil.

Question : *What is the view of the others* ?

Answer : They declare that righteous acts like sacrifice' austerity, and charity should not be abandoned.

The Lord gives His decisive opinion about the problem of Karma in the following verses.

4. निश्चयं शृणु मे तत्र त्यागे भरतसत्तम।
त्यागो हि पुरुषव्याघ्र त्रिविधः संप्रकीर्तितः ॥ ४

*Nischayam srinu me tatra tyage bharata sattama ।
tygo hi purusha vyaghra trividhah samprakirtitah ॥* 4

Meaning : भरत सत्तम *bharata sattamma* : O best of the Bharatas, Arjuna! तत्र *tatra* : there, त्यागे *tyage* : in abandoning action, (about which there is difference of opinion), मे *me* : My, निश्चयं *nischayam* : decision, शृणु *srunu* : hear, पुरुष व्याघ्र *purushavyaghra* : O best of men! त्यागः *tyagah* :

Tyaga, त्रिविधः *trividah :* three–fold, संप्रकीर्तितः हि *samprakirtitah :* has been declared, *hi :* indeed.

Substance : O best of the Bharatas, best of men, Arjuna! hear now my final decision about (this problematic) *tyaga* (the abandoning of *Karma*); *Tyaga* has been declared to be three–fold.

Commentary : The Lord states the difference very clearly (1) give up all *Karma* as evil, say the philosophers, (2) perform sacrifices, austerities and charity, do not abandon them" — others say.

Nischayam srunu me : "Now listen to my decision", says the Lord. The great Master does not leave the disciple in doubt about any spiritual problem. "This is my decision", says Krishna. Who can have any doubt about the Lord's decisive declaration ? Others, who are subject to *Maya*, may err in their views and opinions, however learned they might be. But how can the Lord, who is the Ruler of *Maya*, who knows all about man, his nature, and his goal, state anything mistaken or erroneous ? When He delares, "Now listen to my decision"— it is final, beyond all doubt. Let everybody understand the Lord as much as he can, let him follow His prescribed conduct as best as he can and transcend the evils of *samsara*. May the Lord be the guiding light in this darkness of ignorance. May his word be the law of conduct for all seekers.

Question : *What is the nature of Tyaga ?*

Answer : It is three-fold (Sattvic, Rajasic and Tamasic)

5. यज्ञदानतपः कर्म न त्याज्यं कार्यमेव तत् ।
यज्ञो दानं तपश्चैव पावनानि मनीषिणाम् ॥ ५

Yajna dana tapah karma na tyajyam karyam eva tat
yajno danam tapas chai'va pavanani manishinam 5

Meaning : यज्ञदान तपः कर्म *yajnadana tapah karma :* acts of sacrifice, austerity, and charity, न त्याज्यं *na tyajyam :* should

not be abandoned. कार्यं एव *karyam eva :* should be performed indeed. तत् *tat :* that, यज्ञः *yajnah :* sacrifice, दानं *danam :* charity, तपः च एव *tapah cha eva :* and also austerity. मनीषिणां *manishinam :* for the wise (who do not desire the fruits), पावनानि *pavanani :* (are) purifiers.

Substance : Acts of sacrifice, charity, and austerity should not be abandoned; they should be performed indeed; sacrifice, charity, and austerity are purifiers for the thoughtful (who do not desire for fruits).

Commentary : The Lord gives his decision on the problem (1) *Na tyajyam :* Acts of *yajna*, *tapas* and *dana*, should not be abandoned. (2) *Karyam eva tat :* they should be performed. '*Na tyajyam*' (should not be abandoned) implies '*karyam vea*' (should be performed). But the Lord emphasises His conclusion by putting it both in the negative and positive forms. We can understand how necessary these righteous acts are for the seekers of liberation. Sometimes we come across some philosophers and religious men who deny these acts on the ground that even good acts are a bondage and lead to further births. Their position is directly opposed to the Lord's will. Righteous work of every kind is encouraged very frequently in the Gita. In this verse, the Lord warns not to abandon good acts like sacrifice, austerity and charity. He commands that they should be performed. Why should there be any doubt and why should man go down into lower planes by ignoring the Lord's command? Performed without longing for the fruits, these good works purify the mind and lead to *Atmajnana.* There is no other way.

Pavanani : These acts are purifiers. That is exactly the reason why the Lord exhorts mankind to perform them.

Manishinam : Thoughtful men who are clear in their minds about the goal to be reached, perform these acts without attachment for their fruits. Others who do not understand the secret of work bind themselves by attachment for the fruits of

Karma. Here the word *yajna* refers to the various types of *yajna* mentioned in the fourth Discourse.

Question : *What is the Lord's conclusion about righteous and sacred works ?*

Answer : They should not be abandoned. They should be performed.

Question : *What is the reason ?*

Answer : They are purifiers. They purify the mind and lead to Atmajnana.

Question : *How should they be performed ?*

Answer : Without attachment for their fruits. The thoughtful know the secret of work.

The Lord reiterates his decision.

6\. एतान्यपि तु कर्माणि सङ्गं त्यक्त्वा फलानि च ।
कर्तव्यानीति मे पार्थ निश्चितं मतमुत्तमम् ॥ ६

Etanyapi tu karmani sangam tyaktva phalani cha ।
kartavyani'ti me partha nichitam matam uttamam ॥ 6

Meaning : पार्थ *partha :* O Arjuna! एतानि कर्माणि अपि तु *etani karmani api tu:* These acts (Yajna, Dana, Tapa) verily also, सङ्गं *sangam :* attachment (idea of doership), फलानि च *phalani cha :* and desire for fruits, त्यक्त्वा *tyaktva :* abandoning, कर्तव्यानि *kartavyani :* should be performed, इति *iti :* thus, मे *me :* My, निश्चितं *nischitam :* certain, उत्तमम् *uttamam :* best, मतम् *matam :* opinion.

Substance : Verily these acts should be performed leaving aside attachment (doership) and the fruits; this is my certain and best opinion.

Comentary : The Lord here explains how acts of *yajna, dana* and *tapas* should be performed. The principle is that the

performer should give up the idea of doership and abandon any desire to enjoy the fruits of work. These two evils (1) the feeling 'I am the doer', and (2) 'I will get this reward for my doing this work'— bind man to the wheel of birth and death. They cause bondage. Therefore, the true seekers should learn to conduct these sacrifices, charities and austerities with a pure heart, giving up everything to the Lord. They attain liberation (*Moksha*). The Lord declares that this His decision is the 'best'. Thus inspired by the Lord, let mankind act according to His command and attain the Highest.

Question : *How should acts of Yajna etc, be perpormed?*

Answer : Without a sense of doership and without attachment for their fruits—

Question : *What is the Lord's decision ?*

Answer : It is the best, conclusively proved by the Lord Himself.

The Lord explains the threefold Tyaga, (Sattvic, Rajasic and Tamasic) and first explains the Tamasic.

7\. नियतस्य तु संन्यासः कर्मणो नोपपद्यते ।
मोहात्तस्य परित्यागस्तामसः परिकीर्तितः ॥ ७

Niyatasya tu sannyasah karmano no'papadyate ।
mohat tasya parityagastamasah parikirtitah । 7

Meaning : नियतस्य *niyatasya :* obligatory (by the Sastras), कर्मणः *karmanah :* of action, संन्यासः *sannyasah :* renunciation, तु *tu :* verily, न उपपद्यते *na upapadyate :* is not proper, मोहात् *mohat :* from delusion, तस्य *tasya :* of that (action), परित्यागः *parityagah :* abandoning, तामसः *tamasah :* Tamasic (renunciation), परिकीर्तितः *parikirtitah :* is declared.

Substance : Verily, the renunciation of obligatory action (prescribed by the *Sastras*) is not proper; the abandoning of the same from delusion is declared to be *Tamasic* (renunciation.)

Commentary: The duties of man prescribed by the *Sastras* are intended for the uplift and welfare of mankind in their moral and spiritual life. So, they should not be abandoned. To renounce them by delusion is wrong. When the mind of the *Jiva* is overcast by the clouds of ignorance such thoughts like abandoning *Sastraic* injunctions come to him. The Lord has already declared that the *Sastras* are the authority about what ought to be done and what ought not to be done (17-28). Whatever may be the cause, ignorance, negligence or laziness, abandoning the obligatory acts of the *Sastras* is *Tamasic Tyaga.*

It is to be noted that formely when the Lord has explained the threefold *Yajna, Dana* etc., he followed the order- *Sattva, Rajas* and *Tamas.* But here the order is reversed, and *Tamasic Tyaga* is first mentioned. The idea evidently is that the Lord wants first to condemn *Tamasic* and *Rajasic Tyaga*, before he comes to the *sattvic* type as the most worthy to be followed.

Question : *What is the nature of Tamasic Tyaga ?*

Answer : It proceeds from delusion, which causes the abandoning of obligatory acton by ignorance.

Question : *Why do people abandon Nityakarma ?*

Answer : Out of ignorance (mohat).

Question : *What type of men are they who abandon obligatory duties ?*

Answer : They are deluded and ignorant men.

Rajasic Tyaga is explained.

8. दुःखमित्येव यत्कर्म कायक्लेशभयात्त्यजेत् ।
स कृत्वा राजसं त्यागं नैव त्यागफलं लभेत् ॥ ८

Duhkham ity eva yat karma kayaklesa bhayat tyajet
sa kritva rajasam tyagam nai'va tyagaphalam labhet 8

Meaning : यत् कर्म *yat karma* : what action, कायक्लेश भयात् *kayaklesabhayat* : from fear of bodily discomfort, दुःखं इतिएव *duhkham iti eva* : as also painful, त्यजेत् *tyajet* : abandons, सः *sah* : he, राजसं *rajasam* : Rajasic, त्यागम् *tyagam* : renunciation, कृत्वा *kritva* : having done, त्यागफलं *tyagaphalam* : the fruit of renunciation, न लभेत् एव *na labhet eva* : not even obtains.

Substance: He who abandons obligatory duties from fear of bodily discomfort, as painful (to the body), thus does *Tamasic* renunciation, and obtains not the fruit of renunciation.

Commentary : If the *Tamasic Tyagi* abandons action by ignorance, the *Rajasic tyagi* does so from fear of bodily discomfort. He is lazy and the dullness of the body overpowers him, preventing him from doing the practices. It is true that action which is ultimately beneficial is at first difficult to follow. So, the man of weak will-power neglects it from sheer fear of bodily pain. He renounces them as useless or beyond his power to practise. To get up at the auspicious time of *Brahmamuhurta* (4 A.M.), taking a good bath in cold water in the river or from a well, practising the vow of celibacy, and such other methods may appear difficult in the beginning, but in the long run, they yield the highest reward of joy and happiness, health and strength. The *Rajasic Tyagi* is foregoing a great good for a slight cause. Such is the power of the flesh over the spirit. We find that every great man in any field has mastered the body and made it a simple instrument for useful work. To abandon obligatory duties on account of bodily pain is nothing short of sacrificing the spirit for the sake of the body.

The Teacher of the *Gita* declares that the *Rajasic Tyagi* does not obtain the merit of renunciation by such abandonment of action.

Question : *What is the nature of Rajasic Tyaga ?*

Answer : Abandoning obligatory duties because they are painful to the body is Rajasic Tyaga.

Question : *Does the Rajasic Tyagi get the merit of renunciation?*

Answer : No. He does not obtain the merit of renunciation, because it is not renunciation in the true spirit.

Sattvic Tyaga is now explained.

9. कार्यमित्येव यत्कर्म नियतं क्रियतेऽर्जुन ।
सङ्गं त्यक्त्वा फलं चैव स त्यागः सात्त्विको मतः ॥ ९

Karyam ity eva yat karma niyatam kriyate'rjuna ।
sangam tyaktva phalam chai'va sa tyagah sattviko matah ॥ 9

Meaning : अर्जुन *arjuna :* O Arjuna ! नियतं *niyatam :* prescribed by the Sastras, यत् कर्म *yat karma :* whatsoever work, कार्यमित्येव *karyam iti eva :* ought to be done indeed, सङ्गं *sangam :* attachment, फलं चैव *phalamcha eva :* and also fruit, त्यक्त्वा *tyaktva :* having abandoned, क्रियते *kriyate :* is performed, सः त्यागः *sah tyagah :* that renunciation, सात्त्विकः *sattvikah :* Sattvic, मतः *matah :* is regarded.

Substance : "This ought to be done as prescribed by the *Sastras*"— thus knowing, whatsoever work is done without attachment and desire for fruit, that renunciation is regarded as *Sattvic.*

Commentary : From this verse, one should clearly understand that renunciation of attachment and desire for fruit, is *Sattvic* renunciation, and not certainly the abandoning of obligatory duties. The word '*karyam*' is used to show that prescribed *sastraic* duties ought to be performed. The ignorant man neglects them from delusion, and the *Rajasic* man abandons them from fear of bodily pain. The *Sattvic* man understands the real value of the duties prescribed in the *Sastras*, and performs them inspite of bodily discomfort, without a sense of doership, without attachment for their rewards. This type of renunciation is true *Tyaga*, and by such *Tyaga*, man attains purity and liberation.

Question : *What is the nature of Sattvic Tyaga ?*

Answer : Knowing that certain duties are prescribed by the Sastras, to perform them without attachment and desire for fruits, is Sattvic renunciation.

The Sattvic Tyagi is indifferent to the painful or pleasurable nature of karma.

10. न द्वेष्ट्यकुशलं कर्म कुशले नानुषज्जते ।
त्यागी सत्त्वसमाविष्टो मेधावी छिन्नसंशयः ॥ १०

Na dvesty akusalam karma kusale na'nushajjate ।
tyagi sattvasamavisto medhavi chinnasamsayah ॥ 10

Meaning : सत्त्वसमाविष्टः *sattvasamavishtah :* possessed by purity, मेधावी *medhavi :* intelligent, छिन्नसंशयः *chinnasamsayah :* all doubts cut asunder, त्यागी *tyagi :* the man of renunciation (without attachment and desire), अकुशलं कर्म *akusalam karma :* disagreeable, painful, desireful action, न द्वेष्टि *na dveshti :* does not hate, कुशले *kusale :* to an aggreable one without desire, न अनुषज्जते *na anushajjate :* is not attached, has no personal inclination.

Substance : The *Sattvic Tyagi* possessing purity, intelligent and with all doubts cut asunder, does not hate any disagreeable work nor is he attached to an agreeable one.

Commentary : The preponderance of *Sattva* (purity) in man lifts him above the pairs of opposites, attachment and aversion. He is equal-minded towards all action. He does not abandon an action because it is painful nor does he immerse himself in action because it is pleasing and agreeable to him. When it is said that he has no aversion to desireful or painful actions, it does not mean that he loves them. He is just indifferent to them like the Jivanmukta, and carries the prescribed duties without any attachment for their fruits. He has no sense of doership, and he is not contaminated by them.

Question : *What is the nature of the Sattvic Tyagi ?*

Answer : He possesses perfect purity. He is intelligent. He is free from all doubts. He performs all actions both Sakama and Nishkama without being attached to them in any way. He has no aversion or attachment to the one or the other.

He alone is called a Tyagi who renounces the fruits of work.

11. न हि देहभृता शक्यं त्यक्तुं कर्माण्यशेषतः ।
यस्तु कर्मफलत्यागी स त्यागीत्यभिधीयते ॥ ११

Na hi dehabhrita sakyam tyaktum karmany aseshatah ।
yas tu karmaphala tyagi sa tyagi 'ty abhidhiyate ॥ 11

Meaning: कर्माणि *karmani* : actions, अशेषतः *aseshatah* : completely, त्यक्तुं *tyaktum* : to give up, देहभृता *dehabhita* : for the embodied being, न शक्यं हि *na sakyam hi* : is not indeed possible, यः तु *yah tu* : but who, कर्मफलत्यागी *karmaphalatyagi* : renounces the fruits of work, सः *sah* : he, त्यागी *tyagi* : renouncer, इति *iti* : thus, अभिधीयते *abhidhiyate* : is called.

Substance: Indeed, it is not possible for the embodied being to give up all actions completely; He who renounces the desire for the fruits of action, is called (the true) *Tyagi* (renouncer).

Commentary : The embodied being has to perform action if only for the maintenance of the body. It is impossible for any one to renounce action altogether. Therefore, working without concern for any reward flowing from it, is the best method of life. He is not bound by action. He alone is called the real *Tyagi*. We understand clearly that *Tyaga* definitely means the renunciation of the fruits of action and not the actions. There should not be any sense of doership; there should not be any secret longing to enjoy the fruits of work. No one can be a *tyagi* by simply giving up work, nor can he obtain the merit of

renunciation—Performing all works and yet unconcerned with fruits- this is the characteric feature of the true *Tyagi*. Abandoning external objects is not *Tyaga*. The abandoning of the mental attitude, the internal thought of enjoyment, is the 'sine quo non' of true *Tyaga*. Therefore, the Lord's command is to carry out all prescribed duties in a selfless detached spirit.

Question : *Is it possible to abandon acts altogether ?*

Answer : No. It is not possible for the embodied being.

Question: *Who is a Tyagi ?*

Answer : He who renounces the longing for the fruits of action is a Tyagi (and not he who abandons action).

The Lord explains how man is free from the bondage of Karma by giving up the fruits of actions.

12. अनिष्टमिष्टं मिश्रं च त्रिविधं कर्मणः फलम् ।
भवत्यत्यागिनां प्रेत्य न तु संन्यासिनां क्वचित् ॥ १२

Anistam istam misram cha trividham karmanah phalam ।
bhavaty atyaginam pretya na tu sannyasinam kvachit ॥ 12

Meaning : अनिष्टं *anistam* : evil, painful, disagreeable (causing the births), इष्टं *ishtam* : good, pleasing, agree-able (causing high birth in Heaven), मिश्रं च *misram cha* : and mixed (causing human birth in the world), त्रिविधं *trividham* : threefold, कर्मणः फलं *karmanah phalam* : the fruit of action, अत्यागिनां *atyaginam* : to those who have not renounced the fruits of action, प्रेत्य *pretya* : after death, भवति *bhavati* : accrues, संन्यासिनां तु *sannyasinam tu* : but to those who have renounced the fruits of action, क्वचित् *kvachit* : at any time, न *na* : does not (accrue).

Substance : The threefold fruits of action, evil, good and mixed accrue to the non-renouncer after death; but never to the renouncer.

Commentary : The Lord further elaborates the theme of non-attachment in action. This verse is an answer to those who argue that action should be abandoned because it causes future birth. To whom does *Karma* cause bondage ? Not for all; *Karma* binds only those who have a sense of doership (*Kartritva bhavana*) who have a desire for enjoying the fruits of work. But for those who have abandoned both these, *Karma* has no power to bind them in any way.

Threefold are the fruits action. Evil actions cause low births like beasts and reptiles etc. Good actions cause higher births in the *Devaloka* And action mixed with evil and good produce the human birth Such is the effect of action according to its nature. But these effects are felt only by those who are attached to work. They reap the good and evil effects of their actions in future birth after death.

But these effects are neutralised by the wise man who has no desire for enjoyment either here or hereafter, who has therefore no attachment for the fruits of actions, and who is freed from the delusion of egotism and doership. The word '*kvachit*' implies that at no time is the *Tyagi* affected by the work which he has performed. He attains *Moksha* by the very power of his renunciation. There is no question of a future birth for him. The whole machinery of birth and death stops for him, or he has got out of the terrible wheel of *samsara*. How wonderful is the reward of *Nishkamakarma*! How the Lord loves this holy path to self-realisation !

The Lord explains the five factors which lead to success in action.

13. पञ्चैतानि महाबाहो कारणानि निबोध मे ।
सांख्ये कृतान्ते प्रोक्तानि सिद्धये सर्वकर्मणाम् ॥ १३

Panchai' tani mahabaho karanani nibodha me ।
samkhye kritante proktani siddhaye sarvakarmanam । 13

Meaning : महाबाहो *mahabaho* : O mighty-armed Arjuna ! सर्वकर्मणाम् *sarvakarmanam* : of all actions, सिद्धये *sidhaye* : for,

the accomplishment, कृतान्ते *kritante* : at the end of all actions, सांख्ये *sankhye* : in the Vedanta Sastra, प्रोक्तानि *proktani* : as declared, एतानि *etani* : these, पञ्चकारणानि *panchakaranani* : five courses, मे *me* : from Me, निबोध *nibodha* : know.

Substance : Learn from Me, O Arjuna ! the five courses for the accomplishment of actions, as declared in the *Sankhya Sastra* at the end of *Karmakanda.*

Commentary : *Krita+ante=kritante*, (*i.e*)– the *Vedanta* that is declared at the end of *Karma Kanda*. The word '*kritante*' is used in the sense that when the knowledge of the Self arises, all actions terminate. In the *Vedanta Sastra*, (in the *Upanishads*), *Atma* is declared to be distinct from and transcending *Prakriti*, and all actions are performed by *Prakriti* only, and *Atma* remains as the eternal witness. The *Vedanta* is the termination of all *Karma*. "*Sarvam Karmakhilam Partha Jnane Parisamapyate*"— With the knowledge of the Self all actions come to end, all *Karma* culminates in *Jnana*. When the *Atmic* state is realised, the mind, senses and the body cease to exist, and so there cannot be any action whatsoever. That state is beyond *Karma*. Action can take place only at the lower planes of body and mind. When there are transcended by *Atma-jnana*, action automatically comes to an end. That is the reason why the word '*Kritanta*' is used for the *Vedanta Sastra*, which teaches *Atmajnana*.

Question : *How many factors are needed for the accomplishment of Karma ?*

Answer : Five.

Question : *Where is this taught ?*

Answer : In Sankhya, the Vedanta Sastra in which knowledge of Atma is revealed.

The five causes are explained.

14. अधिष्ठानं तथा कर्ता करणं च पृथग्विधम् ।
विविधाश्च पृथक्चेष्टा दैवं चैवात्र पञ्चमम् ॥ १४

Adhishtanam tatha karta karanam cha prithagvidham ।
vividhas cha prithakcheshta daivam chai'va'tra panchamam॥ 14

Meaning: अत्र *atra :* in the accomplishment of Karma, अधिष्ठानं *adhishtanam :* body (the seat), तथा *tatha :* also, कर्ता *karth :* doer, पृथग्विधम् *prithagvidham :* various, करणं च *karanam cha :* and senses, विविधाः *vividhah :* various, पृथक् *prithak :* different, चेष्टाः च *cheshtah cha :* and functions, पञ्चमम् *panchamam :* the fifth, दैवं चैव *daivam cha eva :* and indeed the presiding deity.

Substance: In the accomplishment of *Karma*, the five factors are (1) the (seat) body, (2) the doer, (3) the various senses, (4) the various and different functions, and (5) the presiding deity, the fifth.

Commentary: The senses are twelve including the five bodily instruments (*karmendriyas*), the five senses (*jnanendriyas*), mind and intellect. Each of these has different and distinct functional capacities, and they are spoken of here as '*Cheshta*'. The word '*Daivam*' stands for the presiding deities of these senses, or the unseen forces of past actions performed already and coming to function now.

Question: *What are the five causes for the accomplishment of Karma ?*

Answer : (1) The body (2) the doer (3) the various senses (4) the various functions of the senses (5) the presiding deity.

For any act performed, these five are said to be the causes.

15. शरीरवाङ्मनोभिर्यत्कर्म प्रारभते नरः ।
न्याय्यं वा विपरीतं वा पञ्चैते तस्य हेतवः ॥ १५

Sarirovangmanobhir yat karma prarabhate narah ।
nyayyam va viparitam va panchai'te tasya hetavah । 15

Meaning: नरः *narah :* man, शरीर वाङ्मनोभिः *sariravangmanobhih :* with body, speech and mind, न्याय्यं वा *nyayyam va :* either prescribed by the Sastras (action), विपरीतं वा *viparitam va:* or opposed to the Sastras (action), यत्कर्म *yat karma :* whatever action, प्रारभते *prarabhate :* starts, तस्य *tasya :* of that (action), एते पञ्च *ete pancha :* these five, हेतवः *hetavah :* (are) causes.

Substance: Whatever action a man performs with his body, speech and mind, whether right (according to the *Sastras*) or the reverse (opposed to the *Sastras*), these five are its causes.

He who thinks of Atma, the witness as the doer, is an ignorant man.

16. तत्रैवं सति कर्तारमात्मानं केवलं तु यः ।
पश्यत्यकृतबुद्धित्वान्न स पश्यति दुर्मतिः ॥ १६

Tatrai'vam sati kartaram atmanam kevalam tu yah ।
pasyatyakrita buddhitvan na sa pasyati durmatih ॥ 16

Meaning: तत्र *tatra :* here (concerning action), एवं सति *evam sati :* this being so (the five having the causes of action), यः *yah :* who, अकृत बुद्धित्वात् *akritabuddhitvat :* owing to untrained understanding, केवलं आत्मानं *kevalam atmanam :* the Self alone, (free from attachment to the body and mind), तु *tu :* verily, कर्तारं *kartaram :* (as) the doer, पश्यति *pasyati :* sees (thinks), सः दुर्मतिः *sah durmatih :* that man of perverted intelligence, न पश्यति *na pasyati :* does not know (the Atma, and the true nature of Karma).

Substance : This being so, (the five factors being the cause of all *Karma*) whoever, on account of untrained understanding, thinks the Self as the doer, he, the man of perverted intelligence, does not know the truth about the nature of *Atma* or the nature of *Karma*.

Commentary : The Self is not the doer of any action. The five above mentioned factors are the causes of all action. The Self is witness, one, without any vehicles *upadhis*, detached from everything, matter, speech and thought. The Lord describes the ignorant man who imagines the Self to be the doer, by the atributes *'akrita buddi'* and *'durmati'*. His understanding is confused because he has not trained it to comprehend the truth by the study of the *Sastras*. He is a man of perverted intelligence (*durmati*). Learning and scholarship, mastery of all worldly sciences and arts do not confer *Atma jnana*, and so they remain in the realm of *'Avidya'* and cannot perceive the truth of *Atma*. They are blind, having eyes; they are perversed having intelligence; they are men of little understanding, having read many things in the world. They are groping in darkness, in spite of all the light that they have gathered about the world. The Self is not understood by them. *Atmajnana* alone clears all the doubts and perversities of the body and mind. Nothing can take man beyond *Samsara* except Self-realisation. All the name and fame that man acquires is so much rubbish compared to the realisation of Truth, for truth alone confers true joy, freedom and perfection. The Lord is pleased with those who strive to know the truth. To win popularity among fellow beings is an ordinary thing, and to win the grace of God is a higher achievement.

The Lord is perfectly clear when he declares the purity and uncontaminated perfection of *Atma*. To understand it and realise *Atma* is the duty of all aspirants.

To consider *Atma* as the doer is evil; the cause of evil is the mind not trained by the study of the *Sastras*; the fruit of evil is the blindness of ignorance.

Question : *What is the nature of Atma ?*

Answer : Alone, uncontaminated, the witness is Atma.

Question : *Why does man think that Atma is the doer ?*

Answer : By delusion, and because the mind is not illumined by the study of the Sastras.

Question : *What is his condition ?*

Answer : The condition of a blind man who is not able to see the light.

Freed from egoism and the sense of doership, man is not bound by Karma.

17\. यस्य नाहंकृतो भावो बुद्धिर्यस्य न लिप्यते ।
हत्वापि स इमाँल्लोकान्न हन्ति न निबध्यते ॥ १७

Yasya na 'hamkrito bhavo buddhir yasya na lipyate
hatva 'pi sa iman lokan na hanti na nibadhyate 17

Meaning : यस्य *yasya :* to whom, अहंकृतः भावः *ahamkritah bhavah :* the idea of 'I am the doer', न *na :* is not, यस्य *yasya :* to whom, बुद्धिः *buddhih :* the intellect (the inner organ), न लिप्यते *na lipyate* is not tainted (by objects and functions), सः *sah :* he, इमान् लोकान् *iman lokan :* these worlds, all the beings, हत्वा अपि *hatva api :* having slain even, न हन्ति *na hanti :* does not slay, न निबध्यते *na nibadhyate :* is not bound (by the evil of action).

Substance : Who is free from the egoistic notion ("I am the doer"), whose intellect is not tainted (by contact with objects and functions), though having slain all the beings, he does not slay, nor is he bound (by the evil of action).

Commentary : It is declared here that the man who has no sense of doership ("I am doing this or that"), whose intellect is not contaminated by anything material, is not affected by evil though he slays all the beings in the world. This verse has to be understood correctly and interpreted very carefully. Otherwise man verily falls into the bottomless pit of ignorance.

The cause of *Karmic* bondage is the sense of doership, personal agency in all actions. The attachment of the deluded intellect to material objects is also the cause of bondage. When

the false sense of agency and attachment are left behind, action has no power to bind man. Good and evil arising from action cannot affect man. This truth is declared here. It certainly does not mean that man can kill people and escape punishment. How can the man of *Atmasakshatkara*, who sees every thing as *Atma*, who knows that he is not the doer, who is unattached, who is established in the self, and who looks upon all beings as his own Self, cause injury to others? He thinks and works for the well-being of all beings. He becomes *'sarva bhuta-hiteratah'*. If anybody thinks and acts otherwise, he is not a Self-realised sage.

In fact, man is not the body, and not the mind. He is *Atma*. When there is no feeling of doership and egotism, he has his life and being in the Self. Thus he is not touched by actions performed by the intellect or the body. Therefore though he slays others, he is not the slayer. This Truth is declared emphatically. The Lord wants to emphasise the absolutely pure and perfect nature of *Atma*, which is independent of every phenomenal change.

Good and evil arise from action done with a feeling of personal doership. Descending from the *Atmic* state, man identifies himself with the mind and body, and hence he gets bound by his own actions. Freed from this delusion, man knows that he is the reality *Atma*, the eternal actionless Self. There is no *'punya'* or *'papa'* for him. He has gone beyond good and evil. Any amount of good does not bind him, and so also no amount of evil can come to him. For that man the little 'I' is dead and gone, and so there is neither the doer nor the enjoyer.

Arjuna, being a *Kshatriya*, has the duty prescribed by the *Sastras* to protect the righteous and destroy the wicked. The Kauravas should be slain for their unrighteousness. The Lord says to the warrior-disciple, "O Arjuna! fight the battle and slay the Kauravas, but do so knowing fully that you are not the personal agent of action, that you are in truth the Eternal Self. Then you shall remain free". Thus here is the Lord's reply to Arjuna's original doubt— "How can I kill my own people?"

The freedom of *Atma* from all good and evil is the Truth. Those who have reached that state have gone beyond both. And yet, let it be firmly known that when the *Atmajnani* acts using the lower instruments, his actions are full of compassion for mankind. His hands do only good work. His mind thinks only good thoughts. His lips speak only good words, benedictions for all. He acts, if he so desires, for the welfare of all beings. Here is the real test of *Atmajnana*. Evil cannot dare come anywhere near him. He is like the lion of whom the lower beasts are afraid and come not near. Let the aspirants bear this clearly in mind and test their knowledge by the purity of their thoughts and actions. Let them not fall into the error of claiming *Atmic* freedom and plunging into the evils of sensual enjoyments.

Question: *What is the cause of evil and bondage?*

Answer : (1) Egotism— "I am the doer", (2) attachment of the intellect with material objects.

Question: *What is the way to escape from bondage?*

Answer : To be free from the sense of doership and attachment to sense objects, is the way to Self-realisation.

The cause and foundation of action are explained.

18. ज्ञानं ज्ञेयं परिज्ञाता त्रिविधा कर्मचोदना ।
करणं कर्म कर्तेति त्रिविधः कर्मसंग्रहः ॥ १८

Jnanam jneyam parijnata trividha karmachodana ।
karanam karma karte'ti trividhah karmasamgrahah ॥ 18

Meaning : कर्म चोदना *karmachodana* : the impulse for action, the cause for action, ज्ञानं *jnanam* : knowledge, ज्ञेयं *jneyam* : the knowable, परिज्ञाता *parijnata* : the knower, त्रिविधा *trividha* : threefold, कर्मसंग्रहः *karmasamgrahah* : basis of action, करणं *karanam* : organs of action (internal and external), कर्म *karma* : action, कर्ता *karta* : the doer, agent, इति *iti* : thus, त्रिविधः *trividhah* : threefold.

Substance : Knowledge, the knowable, and the knower form the threefold impulse to action; the organ, the action and the agent form the threefold basis of action.

Question : *What is the threefold impulse to action ?*

Answer : (1) Knowledge (2) the Knowable, and (3) the Knower.

Question : *What is the threefold basis of action ?*

Answer : (1) the organs (2) the action, and (3) the agent or the doer.

The threefold (sattvic, rajasic and tamasic) aspects of knowledge, action and agent are explained.

19. ज्ञानं कर्म च कर्ता च त्रिधैव गुणभेदतः ।
प्रोच्यते गुणसंख्याने यथावच्छृणु तान्यपि ॥ १९

Jnanam karma cha karta cha tridhai'va gunabhedatah ।
prochyate gunasankhyane yathavacchrinu tanyapi ॥ 19

Meaning : गुणसंख्याने *gunasankhyane* : in the science of the Gunas of Sankhya Sastra, ज्ञानं *jnanam* : knowledge, कर्म च *karma cha* : and action, कर्ता च *kartacha* : and agent, गुण भेदतः *gunabhedatah* : according to the distinction of Gunas, त्रिधैव *tridhaiva* : threefold also, प्रोच्यते *prochyate* : are declared, तानि अपि *tani api* : them also, यथावत् *yathavat* : as the Sastras declare, शृणु *srinu* : hear.

Substance : Knowledge, action and agent are declared to be threefold according to the distinction of *Gunas* in the *Sankhya Sastras*; hear them also as declared in the *Sastras*.

Question : *Of what is the Lord explaining the difference ?*

Answer : (1) Knowledge (2) Action and (3) Agent.

Question : *Where is the distinction explained ?*

Answer : In the Sankhya Sastra, the science of the Gunas.

Taking up knowledge, the Lord first explains Sattvic knowledge.

20. सर्वभूतेषु येनैकं भावमव्ययमीक्षते ।
अविभक्तं विभक्तेषु तज्ज्ञानं विद्धि सात्त्विकम् ॥ २०

Sarvabhuteshu yenai'kam bhavam avyayam ikshate ।
avibhaktam vibhakteshu tajjnanam viddhi sattvikam ॥ 20

Meaning : विभक्तेषु *vibhakteshu* : in the separated, सर्वभूतेषु *sarvabhuteshu* : in all beings (Chara and Achara), एकं *ekam* : one, अव्ययं *avyayam* : indestructible, भावं *bhavam* : Atma, existence of the Lord, येन *yena* : by which knowledge, अविभक्तं *avibhaktam* : the unseperated (one), ईक्षते *ekshate* : sees (knows), तत् ज्ञानं *tat jnanam* : that knowledge, सात्त्विकम् *sattvikam* : as Sattvic, विद्धि *viddhi* : know.

Substance : In all the beings separated into different categories, that knowledge which sees the one inseperable Reality (*Atma*), know it to be *Sattvic Jnana.*

Commentary : To the physical eye and the deluded mind, the beings of the world both moving and non-moving appear distinct and separate from one another. They are divided into separate categories. But to man in whom the knowledge is opened, the one inseparable and indivisible *Brahman* alone appears as the one Reality pervanding all. That knowledge by which this oneness is dicovered, known and seen is called *Sattvic Jnana.*

Sarvabhuteshu : The Lord (*Atma*) is present in all beings of the universe. So, even the lowest of beings have the Lord as their back-ground and foundation. Knowing it every one can reach the Supreme. Though the wave is small and weak, yet the foundation for it is the mighty ocean. Merging in it, the little wave realises its mighty reality. So also, the little man, who is thinking of himself as low, weak, wretched and miserable, can realise his immeasurable power and knowledge by merging in *Atma*, the one reality behind everything in the universe. Know that you are *Atma*, and you are freed from all limitations.

The wise man sees the ocean behind the millions of waves big and small. He sees the clay in the millions of earthern pots of different shapes and sizes. He sees the string behind the hundreds of colourful flowers in the garland. This is the perception of the Reality behind the appearanses. By this knowledge, man sees the one indivisible ocean of Sachidananda throughout the universe. In the sun, in the moon, in the stars, in the oceans and mountains and rivers and trees, in men and women, in all the animals, birds and all beings moving and immoving, he sees the one Self, *Atma*, the Lord. In the diversity, he sees the unity; in the perishing, he sees the Indestructible;in the insentient matter, he sees the one consciousness; in the changing, he sees the chargeless. This is *Sattvic Jnana*. From this we understand that ignorance is the cause of the perception of manifoldness. Knowledge sees the One, ignorance the many.

Three attributes are mentioned referring to *Atma*. (1) One, (2) Indestructible (3) Indivisible. The difference between *Atma* and the objective universe is given below.

Atma	*Objects*
(1) One (ekam)	(1) Manifold
(2) Indestructible (Avyayam)	(2) Subject to death
(3) Indivisible (Avibhaktam)	(3) Separated

People speak of different kinds of knowledge in the world, as knowledge of physics or mathematics, or the arts like painting and *architechure* etc, of the administrative and political systems, and so on. This knowledge does not take one beyond the objective world. The unity is not preceived or apprehended by this knowledge. What science can teach people to know the one Indivisible, Indestructible *Atma* ? What science can take them beyond the reach of death and destruction ? What science can help them to see the Eternal and Immortal in this constantly changing universe ? No material science can open this eye of knowledge. It is *Brahma Vidya* alone that will enable men to see the world as it really is. It is *Brahmajnana* alone which enables men to know what they really are, and which will shatter the binding veil of ignorance and delusion. Of what use is all the

knowledge of the world without knowing the basis, the foundation of all beings ? So, let all aspire for that knowledge which alone will unravel the insorutable mystery of life and death, and which will take beyond the horrible shadows of destruction whereunder all people are moving with fear and sorrow. Let us not be content with a little bit of intellectual culture and imagine it to be the be all and end all of life. All other kinds of knowledge cannot give a person the Absolute Truth. As a result, man lives and dies in *samsara*, and goes through the endless suffering of birth and death again and again.

The *Upanishads* declare the same truth.

"*Mrityossamrityumapnoti ya iha naneva pasyati*"

"He who sees here the manifold only goes from death to death".

Therefore, whatever being we see, we should try to go beyond the external name and form, and look at the reality, *Atma*, invariably present in all beings. To see only the object, its shape, form and size, is the lowest, to see its qualities is a better developed vision, and to see the *Atma*, the basis and the foundation of all objects, is the highest vision. By the last, man realises the Self in himself and in all beings. This *Sattvic Jnana* is the highest state, and the ultimate goal of all spiritual endeavour.

Question: *What is the nature of Sattvic Jnana ?*

Answer : It is knowledge which enables man to see the one in the manifold, to see the eternal in the perishable, and to see the inseparable in the separated.

Question : *Where is God ?*

Answer : In all beings (moving and unmoving)

Question : *What is the nature of Atma ?*

Answer : It is one, indestructible and indivisable.

Question : *Is the manifold real ?*

Answer : No, oneness is the Reality, like water in the waves, like clay in different pots, like gold in different jewels, and like string in the garland.

Rajasic Jnana is explained.

21. पृथक्त्वेन तु यज्ज्ञानं नानाभावान्पृथग्विधान् ।
वेत्ति सर्वेषु भूतेषु तज्ज्ञानं विद्धि राजसम् ॥ २१

Prithaktvena tu yajjnanam nanabhavan prithagvidhan ।
vetti sarveshu bhuteshu tajjnanam viddhi rajasam ॥ 21

Meaning : यत् ज्ञानं *yat jnanam :* which knowledge, सर्वेषु *sarveshu :* in all, भूतेषु *bhuteshu :* beings, पृथग्विधान् *prithagvidhan :* of distinct kinds, नाना भावान् *nanabhavan :* various entities, पृथक्त्वेन तु *prithaktvena tu :* as different from one another, वेत्ति *vetti :* knows, तत् ज्ञानं *tat jnanam :* that knowledge, राजसं *rajasam :* Rajasic, विद्धि *viddhi :* know.

Substance : That knowledge which sees in all beings various entities (*Jivas*) of distinct kinds as different from one another, know that knowledge as *Rajasic*.

Commentary : The knowledge which is guided by separateness is *Rajasic*. By this knowledge one sees only separateness everywhere as—"He is good, he is bad, he is rich, he is poor, this is dog, this is elephant; this is water, that is stone" etc— Thus the idea of separateness persists everywhere for the *Rajasic* man. This knowledge is the cause of all friction and conflict everywhere. When mankind is separated by religion, race, nationality, political doctrines, the result is conflict as we see it everywhere in the world. This knowledge is not knowledge, because it does not enable one to see the underlying unity of all beings. The *Advaitic* vision of the universal existence of *Atma* is the true vision, and it is this vision only which can put an end to all frictions and conflicts in the world. So long as man is contented with *Rajasic* knowledge and thinks of it as the only knowledge available for mankind, the world would be torn asunder by conflicting elements fighting for superiority and supremacy over one another.

Question : *What is the nature of Rajasic-Jnana ?*

Answer : Seeing the manifold one entity as different from another, is Rajasic knowledge.

Tamasic-jnana is explained :

22. यत्तु कृत्स्नवदेकस्मिन्कार्ये सक्तमहैतुकम् ।
अतत्त्वार्थवदल्पं च तत्तामसमुदाहृतम् ॥ २२

Yat tu kritsnavad ekasmin karye saktam ahaitukam ।
atattvarthavad alpam cha tat tamasam udahritam । 22

Meaning : यत्तु *yat tu :* which (knowledge) verily, एकस्मिन् कार्ये *ekasmin karye :* in one such act (body or image), कृत्स्नवत् *kritsnavat :* as all (that alone in all), सक्तं *saktam :* attached, अहैतुकम् *ahaitukam:* without any reason, अतत्त्वार्थवत् *atattvarthavat:* without foundation in Truth (not knowing the Truth), अल्पं च *alpam cha :* and trivial (producing trivial result), तत् *tat :* that (knowledge), तामसम् *tamasam :* Tamasic, उदाहृतम् *udahritam :* is declared.

Substance : The knowledge by which, man clings to one thing (body or image) as if it were the whole, without reason and foundation in Truth, and which is trivial, that is declared to be *Tamasic* (*Jnana*).

Commentary : *Tamasic Jnana* is narrow and blind. The man attaches himself to one single thing considering it to be the whole. Such narrowness is the result of ignorance. Attached to money, the greedy man considers it as the whole of the universe; attached to lust, the immoral man clings to the body as the whole of life; attached to some doll, the ignorant man considers it as the whole Truth. Thus we find that a single thing occupies the entire being. Besides, it is a trivial thing producing very little result. It is a thing which has no basis in Truth. Thus *Tamasic Jnana* is narrow and blind to Truth. He sees matter and thinks there is nothing beyond it.

Rajasic knowledge is higher; He sees many things distinctly and separately. His vision goes deeper into the qualities of each thing which divides one from another. But he has not yet arrived at the basic Reality. He loses himself in multiplicity and manifoldness and sees separateness every-where.

Sattvic knowledge reveals the basic Truth of the One Indivisible *Atma* pervading the whole universe. In all things, he sees the One *Atma.* The external coatings of matter, colour, size, qualities are all transcended and the one *Sat* appears to him in everything. Arriving at this knowledge of Oneness, man knows the ultimate truth and is no longer deluded. He attains *Atma*, and goes beyond the cycle of birth and death. In the midst of the many, who sees the One,-he alone sees (Knows the Truth about himself and everything in the universe.)

Question : *What is the nature of Tamasic jnana ?*

Answer : Holding one single thing and thinking of it as the whole is Tamasic jnana. (For exaple, seeing the body and thinking of it as the whole Truth). There is no rational judgment behind this knowledge. It is not founded on Truth. It is trifling, producing trivial result.

Sattvic karma is explained.

23. नियतं सङ्गरहितमरागद्वेषतः कृतम् ।
अफलप्रेप्सुना कर्म यत्तत्सात्त्विकमुच्यते । २३

Niyatam sangarahitam aragadveshatah kritam ।
aphalaprepsuna karma yat tat sattvikam uchyate । 23

Meaning : नियतं *niyatam :* ordained by the Sastras. यत् कर्म *yat karma :* which action, अफल प्रेप्सुना *aphalaprepsuna :* by one not desiring the fruit, सङ्गरहितम् *sangarahitam :* without the sense of doership, अरागद्वेषतः *aragadveshatah :* free from desire and aversion. कृतम् *kritam :* is performed. तत् *tat :*

that (Karma), सात्त्विकम् *sattvikam* : Sattvic, उच्यते *uchyate :* is called.

Substance : Ordained by the *Sastras*, that action, performed by one not desirous of the fruit, without attachment, free from love and hate, is called *Sattvic karma.*

Commentary : Wherever the word '*karma*' is used, the Lord invariably employs the attribute '*niyatam*' or its equivalent, thereby emphasising the authority of the *Sastras* about all the activities of mankind. No one should consider his personal opinion as the measure of Truth. Every seeker should know what is ordained in the *Sastras*, examine it by personal experience, and then act rightly in all matters. Half-digested notions, fanciful theories, personal likes and dislikes, are now a days taken as basic truths by individual members in society. Independent judgment has come down to the level of personal feelings of men who are subject to a hundred vile passions and prejudices. So, without deluding oneself by clinging to his own views, notions, and opinions, men should act according to the *Sastras*, as the *Sastras* embody the combined wisdom of sages who have gone beyond '*raga*' and '*dvesha*', and whose only aim is to work for the welfare of humanity.

As no man can live without action, as action is life itself as we see, it is necessary to know the principles of action.

1) Action should be as prescribed by the *Sastras.*

2) It should be performed without attachment, without any feeling of doership.

3) It should be performed without attraction or aversion

4) It should be performed without desire for the fruit.

This is the four-way test of *Sattvic* action. It purifies the mind, washes away the evils of the heart, corrects all defects, confers knowledge, and leads to *Moksha.*

Formerly, the Lord has declared that action should be without the sense of doership '*Sangarahitam*' and also the actor

should be free from the taint of egotism. There should not be the feeling "I am doing this or that, this is my work". This is the secret of work. Such work does not bind. The message of the *Gita* is this secret of work. The call to act and the way how to perform action, are the chief instructions of the *Gita*.

Aragadveshatah : No action can be pure, if it is performed by the impulses of desire and hatred. The motive behind action vitiates it. All actions generally are the effects of the impulses of *Raga* and *Dvesha*. When there is no such longing for objects, action becomes pure and perfect.

Question : *What is the nature of Sattvic Karma?*

Answer : (1) It is ordained by the Sastras; (2) It is performed without attachment; (3) It is not motivated by passions and prejudices; (4) It is done without desire for fruit. Such is Sattvic Karma.

Rajasic Karma is explained.

24. यत्तु कामेप्सुना कर्म साहंकारेण वा पुनः ।
क्रियते बहुलायासं तद्राजसमुदाहृतम् ॥ २४

Yat tu kamepsuna karma sahamkarena va punah ।
kriyate bahulayasam tad rajasam udahritam ॥ 24

Meaning : कामेप्सुना *kamepsuna* : by one who desires firut, पुनः *punah* : again, साहंकारेण वा *sahamkarena va* : or by one who is egotistic (feels "I am the doer"), बहुलायासं *bahulayasam* : with great effort, यत् कर्म तु *yat karma tu* : which action, क्रियते *kriyate* : is performed, तत् *tat* : that, राजसं *rajasam* : Rajasic, उदाहृतम् *udahritam* : is declared.

Substance : That action which is done by one longing for desires, or again with egotism, or with much effort, is declared to be *Rajasic* (*Karma*).

Commentary : Action performed with a longing for its

fruit and with the egotistic feeling of personal agency is *Rajasic* action. It is performed with great effort (*bahulayasam*).

The passionate man burdens himself with such work that causes unnecessary labour and effort. And it implies that the fruit is not commensurate with the effort put into the work. The action becomes restless and troubled in the course of the action, because his eye is on the rewards to be obtained from it, and also the pride of having brought the action to a successful end. Both these inner motives make the work painful and burdensome. He cannot have the self-sacrifice of the *Sattvic* man, who performs equally great action but without losing his balance and equanimity. He acts because the *Sastras* have sanctioned the action, and is not conscious of any personal feeling or attachment to its end. He is therefore free and joyous. Desire for reward is bondage; egoism is bondage. The seekers should learn to avoid these two great evils which bind the self to the wheel of *Karma*.

Question : *What is the nature of Rajasic Karma?*

Answer : (1) It is done with a desire for fruit; (2) It is performed with the egotistic feeling "I am the doer"; (3) It causes much exertion.

Tamasic Karma is explained.

25. अनुबन्धं क्षयं हिंसामनपेक्ष्य च पौरुषम् ॥
मोहादारभ्यते कर्म यत्तत्तामसमुच्यते ॥ २५

Anubandham kshayam himsam anapekshya cha paurusham ।
mohad arabhyate karma yat tat tamasam uchyate । 25

Meaning : अनुबन्धं *anubandham* : the consequence of action, (like sorrow etc.) क्षय *kshayam* : loss (of money, etc.), हिंसाम् *himsam* : injury (to himself and others), पौरुषम् च *paurusham cha* : and (his own) ability, अनपेक्ष्य *anapekshya* : without considering, मोहात् *mohat* : from delusion, यत् कर्म *yat karma* : whatever action, आरभ्यते *arabhyate* : is undertaken, तत् *tat* : that, तामसम् *tamasam* : Tamasic, उच्यते *uchyate* : is declared.

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Substance : Whatever action is undertaken from delusion, without regard to consequences of loss (of money etc), injury (to himself and others), and (one's own) ability, is declared *Tamasic* (*Karma*).

Commentary : *Tamasic* action is every way dark and deluded. It is action proceeding from ignorance. The consequences of the action are not thought over by the doer. He does no consideration of his own ability to perform the work. He does not foresee the dangerous effects of his actions, like loss of money and honour, injury to himself and to others. From every point of view such action is irrational.

Whatever action is performed without dedication to God and with the object of amassing material things is either *Rajasic* or *Tamasic*, because the doer does not consider the evil done to himself by slavery to *Samsara*.

Mohat : The origin of all *Rajasic* and *Tamasic* action is delusion. The delusion should first be cleared by right understanding and the actions thereafter become purified of its evil and binding nature.

Question : *What is the nature of Tamasic Karma ?*

Answer : Whatever work is done without regard to the ensuing effects, without regard to the loss or injuries to oneself and others, and without regard to one's own ability, is *Tamasic*.

Question : *What is the cause of such blind action ?*

Answer : Ignorance – want of discrimination.

The Lord explains the nature of the Sattvic Karta.

26. मुक्तसङ्गोऽनहंवादी धृत्युत्साहसमन्वितः ।
सिद्ध्यसिद्ध्योर्निर्विकारः कर्ता सात्त्विक उच्यते ॥ २६

Muktasango 'nahamvadi dhrityutsahasamanvitah |
***siddhyasiddyor nirvikarah karta sattvika uchyate |* 26**

Meaning : मुक्तसङ्गः *muktasangah :* freed from attachement, अनहंवादी *anahamvadi :* who does not say 'I am the doer', धृत्युत्साहसमन्वितः *dhrityutsahasamanvitah :* endued with firmness and enthusiasm, सिद्ध्यसिद्ध्योः *siddhyasiddhyoh :* in success or failure, निर्विकारः *nirvikarah :* unaffected, कर्ता *karta :* the agent, सात्त्विकः *sattvikah :* Sattvic, उच्यते *uchyate :* is called.

Substance : An actor agent who is freed from attachment, non-egotistic, unaffected in success and failure, endued with firmness and enthusiasm, is called *Sattvic* (*karta*).

Commentary : As man is constantly acting in everyday life, it is necessary for him to know what the best qualities of an agent should be. Here, four conditions are prescribed for the *Sattvic* agent.

(1) He should be free from longing for the fruits of his work. This detachment unables the agent to maintain his freedom in the midst of the work he is doing. In fact, it is this spirit of freedom which is to be safeguarded at every turn in this course of earthly life. Freedom is the very essence of spiritual realisation.

(2) The absence of the egotistic feeling 'I am the doer; I am doing this or that' is the second quality of the *Sattvic* agent. It is a clear perception that all action is performed only by the *Gunas* and the instruments of action. When a man attains this clearness of understanding, he is finally aware that he is not the real actor or agent. He has no egotistic feeling. He remains a witness of all that he is doing with his body, senses and mind.

(3) The third attribute of the *Sattvic* agent is firmness and enthusiasm. Timidity and despondence have no place in the spiritual field. Such a man cannot make any progress towards the goal. In fact it was despondence that overtook Arjuna on the battle field as described in the opening chapter of the *Gita*. The effects of such low-spirits are vividly described there. The message of the *Gita* is to lift up the fallen soul by asserting the

inherent divinity of human beings. "I am the ever pure (*suddha*), intelligent (*buddha*) free (*mukta*) *Atma*"-this thought kept up frequently gives infinite strength and courage to man. In truth, man is not the perishable body or the fickle mind or the deluded intellect. He is *Atma*, the indivisible ocean of *Sat Chit Ananda*. What can frighten and terrify him ? So thinking and realising, man moves forward with courage and resolution.

4) The fourth attribute is equanimity in the midst of success and failure. If failure comes, he is not deterred, but strives again and again till success comes to him. The seeker comes across severe hurdles in the course of his journey to the ultimate, but undaunted by obstacles which may appear super-human, he moves forward, for he knows that the spirit shall finally triumph over matter. Thus the *Sattvic* agent is firm as a rock in the midst of the trials and shocks of life. He is full of hope and courage. He knows the ephemeral nature of the world and the reality of the Self, transcending all that is phenomenal in this world and in all the worlds altogether.

Question : *What is the nature of the Sattvic Agent ?*

Answer : (1) He is unconcerned with the fruits of action; (2) He has abandoned the notion that he is the actor; (3) He is firm and enthusiastic in all work; (4) He is uneffected by success or failure.

The nature of the Rajasic Karta is explained.

27. रागी कर्मफलप्रेप्सुर्लुब्धो हिंसात्मकोऽशुचिः ।
हर्षशोकान्वितः कर्ता राजसः परिकीर्तितः ॥ २७

Ragi karmaphalaprepsur lubdho himsatmako'suchih ।
harshasokanvitah karta rajasah parikirtitah ॥ 27

Meaning : रागी *ragi :* passionate (being attached to relations), कर्म फल प्रेप्सुः *karmaphalaprepsuh :* desirous of the fruits of action, लुब्धः *lubdhah :* miserly, हिंसात्मकः *himsatmakah :* cruel, अशुचिः *asuchih :* impure, हर्ष शोकान्वितः *harshasokanvitah :* moved by joy (in success) and sorrow (in failure), कर्ता *karta :* agent, राजसः *rajasah :* Rajasic, परिकीर्तितः *parikirtitah :* is called.

Substance : Passionate, longing for the fruits of action, greedy, cruel, impure, moved by elation (when successful) and despair (when unsuccessful)— such an agent is called *Rajasic*.

Commentary : It is clear that the seeker who is aspiring the higher good should abandon all the weaknesses and evils described about the *Rajasic* agent. There should not be an passionate attachment to relations. There should not be any longing for the fruits of actions. No injury should be caused to others. All impurities, external and internal, should be thoroughly cleansed. The mind should be steady and balanced when pleasant things happen and when undesirable things occur. He should bear all the pains of opposites with perfect forbearance. Having examined one's own self, every one should try to elevate himself to the plane of *Sattvic* actor.

Question : *What is the nature of the Rajasic karta ?*

Answer : (1) He is passionately attached to relations; (2) He is always thinking of the fruits of action: (3) He is greedy, cruel, and impure; (4) He is easily upset by success and failure.

The nature of the Tamasic karta is explained.

28. अयुक्तः प्राकृतः स्तब्धः शठो नैष्कृतिकोऽलसः ।
विषादी दीर्घसूत्री च कर्ता तामस उच्यते ॥ २८

Ayuktah prakritah stabdhah satho naiskritiko 'lasah ।
vishadi dirghasutri cha karta tamasa uchyate ॥ 28

Meaning : अयुक्तः *ayuktah :* unsteady, प्राकृतः *prakritah :* vulgar, स्तब्धः *stabdhah :* unbending, without modesty, शठः *sathah :* cheating, नैष्कृतिकः *naishkritikah :* deceiving others and ruining their life, अलसः *alasah :* lazy, विषादी *vishadi :* desponding, pessimistic, दीर्घसूत्री च *dirghasutri cha :* and procrastinating,

taking a long time to complete a work that could be done in a short time), कर्ता *karta :* agent, तामसः *tamasah :* Tamasic. उच्यते *uchyate :* is said.

Substance : One who has no self-restraint (concentration of purpose), vulgar, immodest, cheating, deceiving others and ruining their life, lazy, always pessimistic (ful of doubts and fears), procrastinating (leaving incomplete eve a small work that could be performed in a short time),-such an agent is said to be *Tamasic.*

Commentary : *Ayuktah* : One whose mind is externalised and wandering, is not centred in the Self, who is devoid of self control, is called '*Ayuktah*'. He has no integrated personality and hence his energies are frittered away in restless and useles avocations.

Prakritah : One who is swayed by natural instincts of th lower type, and therefore vulgar is called a *Prakritah.* It i man's duty to transform himself by training and education, an make himself the image of divinity.

Naishkritikah : These wicked people deceive and ruin the life of others, without deriving any benefit for themselves Four classes of men in order of merit are described by Bhartrihari—

1) Those who sacrifice their own interests for the sake of others;

2) Those who respect their interests and help others;

3) Those who sacrifice the interests of others to gain their own ends;

4) Those who ruin others without any advantage to themselves.

The '*naishkritikah*' mentioned here belogs to the last two classes of men.

Alasah : Laziness is a sign of *Tamas*, and the Lord exhorts Arjuna to overcome this obstacle in any field of activity. There is no place at all for idlers in the spiritual field.

Vishadi : The *Tamasic* agent is dispondent and pessimistic in every matter. It is certainly due to ignorance that man ho is in essence the very embodiment of supreme joy should eep and wail like a weak and wretched being. Through knowing is nature, *Atma,* every one should rise above sorrow and ispondency.

Dirghasutri : Procrastination, mental indecision, want of ertness– these are the signs of a *Tamasic* agent. He never arts any good work, and even after starting, he never ompletes it. Doubting and fearing, he works his life without oing anything good to himself or to others. In the *Santiparva* f *Mahabharata,* Bhishma describes three types of characters nder the names of three fishes '*Dirghadarsi,*' '*Praptakalajna*' nd '*Dirghasutri*'. *Dirghadarsi* is far-sighted, and so anticipates anger and avoids it even before it overtakes him. *Praptakalajna* less active. *Dirgasutri* does not act at all. The last falls into ie net of the fisherman in the story and dies. The *Tamasic* agent ses the battle of life even without any action. He falls an asy victim to circumstances and comes to an inglorious end.

uestion : *What is the nature of the Tamasic agent ?*

nswer : (1) He is devoid of self-control or concentration; (2) He is vulgar; (3) He is immodest and stubborn; (4) He is a cheat; (5) He deceive others and ruins their life; (6) He is always pessimistic and despondent; (7) He is procrastinating.

The Lord explains the threefold aspects of Buddhi and Dhriti.

29. बुद्धेर्भेदं धृतेश्चैव गुणतस्त्रिविधं शृणु ।
प्रोच्यमानमशेषेण पृथक्त्वेन धनञ्जय ॥ २९

Buddher bhedam dhrites chai'va gunatas trividham srinu
prochyamanam aseshe'na prithaktvena dhanamjaya 29

Meaning : धनञ्जय *dhanamjaya :* O Arjuna ! बुद्धेः *buddheh :* of buddhi (intellect), धृतेश्चैव *dhritescha eva :* and also of

firmness, courage, भेदं *bhedam :* division, गुणतः *gunatah :* according to the qualities, त्रिविधं *trividham :* threefold, पृथक्त्वेन *prithaktvena :* distinctly, अशेषेण *aseshena :* fully, प्रोच्यमानम् *prochyamanam :* is being declared, शृणु *srinu :* (you) hear.

Substance : Hear you, O Arjuna! The threefold division of intellect (*buddhi*) and firmness (*dhriti*) according to qualities; I will declare it to you fully and distinctly.

The Sattvic buddhi is first explained.

30 प्रवृत्तिं च निवृत्तिं च कार्याकार्ये भयाभये
बन्धं मोक्षं च या वेत्ति बुद्धिः सा पार्थ सात्त्विकी ॥ ३०

Pravrittim cha nivrittim cha karyakarye bhayabhaye ।
bandham moksham cha ya vetti buddhih sa partha sattviki ॥ 30

Meaning : पार्थ *partha :* O Arjuna! या बुद्धिः *ya bhuddhih :* that intellect (which), प्रवृत्तिं च *pravrittim cha :* and the way of righteous action, (or Karma Marga), निवृत्तिं च *nivrittim cha :* and cessation from unrighteous (or the way of renunciation—Sannyasa Marga), कार्याकार्ये *karyakarye :* what ought to be done and what ought not to be done, भयाभये *bhayabhaye :* fear and fearlessness, बन्धं *bandham :* bondage, मोक्षं च *moksham cha :* and liberation, वेत्ति *vetti :* knows, सा *sa :* that (intellect), सात्त्विकी *sattviki :* (is) Sattvic.

Substance : O Arjuna! That intellect which knows what is righteous action (or *karma marga*) and cessation of unrighteous action (or *Sannyasa marga*), what ought to be done and what ought not to be done, fear and fearlessness, bondage and liberation, is *Sattvic.*

Commentary : The *Sattvic* intellect discriminates between what is good and what is bad, adopts that which is good, and

gives up what is evil. So also, it discriminates between bondage and liberation, gives up the former and follows the path of *Moksha.* It gives up the world which causes fear, takes to the path of *Brahman* and attains fearlessness and joy. The *Sattvic* intellect is the highest instrument for self-realisation. Every one should examine himself and find out whether his intellect is pure in the eyes of God. Intellect by itself however short and powerful it may be in worldly matters, does not help men to reach the highest goal.

Question : *What is the nature of the Sattvic intellect ?*

Answer : It is capable of discriminating–

1) between *Dharma* and *Adharma*
2) between what ought to be done, and what ought not to be done,
3) between fear and fearlessness; and
4) between bondage and liberation.

The Rajasic intellect is explained.

31. यया धर्ममधर्मं च कार्यं चाकार्यमेव च ।
अयथावत्प्रजानाति बुद्धिः सा पार्थ राजसी ॥ ३१

Yaya dharmam adharmam cha
karyam cha 'karyam eva cha ।
ayathavat prajanati
buddhih sa partha rajasi ॥ 31

Meaning : पार्थ *partha :* O Arjuna! यया *yaya :* by what intellect, धर्मम् *dharmam :* Dharma (good), अधर्मम् च *adharmam cha :* and Adharma (evil), कार्यं च *karyam cha :* and what ought to be done, अकार्यं एव च *akaryam eva cha:* and also what ought not to be done, अयथावत् *ayathavat :* erroneously, (not as they are), प्रजानाति *prajanati :* knows, सा बुद्धिः *sa buddhih :* that intellect, राजसी *rajasi :* Rajasic.

Substance : O Arjuna ! that intellect by which one understands erroneously what is good and evil, what ought to be done and what ought no to be done, is *Rajasic*.

Commentary : The *Sastras* and the elders have prescribed the laws of righteousness, and action. The purified mind knows their value and adopts them as the rule of conduct in life. But the *Rajasic* intellect, clouded by passion, gets a wrong view of life and man is drawn away from the true goal of life, *Brahmajnana*. The seekers should carefully test their understanding and follow the approved laws of the *Sastras* in their life.

Question : *What is the nature of the Rajasic intellect ?*

Answer : The *Rajasic* intellect, darkened by passion, wrongly understands *Dharma* and *Adharma*, and what ought to be done and what ought not to be done.

The Tamasic intellect is explained.

32. अधर्मं धर्ममिति या मन्यते तमसावृता ।
सर्वार्थान्विपरीतांश्च बुद्धिः सा पार्थ तामसी ॥ . ३२

Adharmam dharmam iti ya manyate tamasa 'vrita ।
sarvarthan viparitams cha buddhih sa partha tamasi ॥ 32

Meaning : पार्थ *partha* : O Arjuna ! या *ya* : which intellect, तामसा *tamasa* : by darkness, आवृता *avrita* : enveloped, अधर्मं *adharmam* : evil, धर्मं इति *dharmam iti* : as good, सर्वार्थान् *sarvarthan* : all things, विपरीतांश्च *viparitams cha* : as perversed, मन्यते *manyate* : thinks, सा बुद्धिः *sa buddhih* : that intellect, तामसी *tamasi* : Tamasic.

Substance : O Arjuna ! that intellect, enveloped in darkness, which thinks *Adharma* as *Dharma*, and all things perverted is *Tamasic*.

Commentary : All things appear topsy-turvy to the man of *Tamasic* intellect. Like the reflection which appears upside

down, and like the reflection in a feeble mirror which appears distorted, the whole world gives a wrong picture to the *Tamasic* intellect. The open path of *Dharma* is closed for him, and he treads the path of *Adharma* thinking it to be *Dharma*. Neither the teachings of the elders nor the injunctions of the *Sastras*, are acceptable to them. They follow their own way and destroy themselves. What is the cause for such self-destruction ? Their reason is clouded by ignorance, and darkened by passion. To the drunkard, the world appears to reel and whirl about and so also to the deluded man, the whole world appears in a perverted light. For example :-

(1) the unreal world and the body appear real to them; and the Supreme Reality *Atma* is non-existent (to them). (2) The pleasures of the body appear enjoyable to them; and the bliss of *Atma* has no relish for them; (3) They find beauty in a bit of human flesh whereas they have no thought of the eternal beauty of *Sachidananda* (Satyam Sivam Sundaram).

They see *Dharma* as *Adharma* and *Adharma* as *Dharma*. This is due to the delusion caused by ignorance. Therefore such dark intellect is the worst form of bondage. Worldly knowledge, power and position are utterly useless to clear the clouds of ignorance. One should acquire purity of mind which sees the Truth as it is, and attain liberation.

Question : *What is the nature of the Tamasic intellect ?*

Answer : It is enveloped by ignorance, and therefore interprets every thing in a wrong way.

The three-fold Dhriti (firmness) is explained—First the Sattvic.

33. धृत्या यया धारयते मनःप्राणेन्द्रियक्रियाः ।
योगेनाव्यभिचारिण्या धृतिः सा पार्थ सात्त्विकी ॥ ३३

Dhritya yaya dharayate manah pranendriya kriyah ।
yogena 'vyabhicharinya dhritih sa partha sattviki । 33

Meaning : पार्थ *partha :* O Arjuna ! अव्यभिचारिण्या *avyabhicharinya :* unswerving, यया धृत्या *yaya dhritya (yuktah) :* endowed with which firmness, मनः प्राणेन्द्रिय क्रियाः *manahpra-nendriyakriyah :* the functions of the mind, the vital forces, and the bodily organs, योगेन *yogena :* by yoga, (or steady concentration), धारयते *dharayate :* holds (in self-knowledge or in the righteous way of the Sastras), सा धृतिः *sa dhritih :* that firmness, सात्त्विकी *sattviki :* (is) sattvic (pure).

Substance : O Arjuna ! that unswerving firmness which, by *Yoga*, holds the functions of the mind, Prana and bodily organs, is called *Sattvic* (pure).

Commentary : Firm courage is exhibited by men in various directions in the world. Some fight harmless, some roam about freely in dark and dangerous forests, some climb mountain peaks, some reach the moon in rockets, and so on. We are able to see and understand this style of courage and firmness. But here, the firm holding of the internal forces is explained. The mind, the vital forces, the external and internal instruments of the body, should be held, controlled, by unswerving Yogic concentration. This is '*Sattvic Dhriti*'. The *yogi* is determined to conquer the whole of the inner universe and keep it under his control. He draws the mind back from the innumerable temptations of the sense-enjoyment; he frees himself from the tremendous delusion of the objective universe. This is *Sattvic* courage and firmness. Besides worldly courage which helps man to overcome external difficulties and dangers, one should cultivate firmness of *Yoga* in the conquest of the internal forces.

This courage should be unswerving, firm, and immovable. Therefore it is described as '*avyabhicharinya*'. We see that the courage of renunciation is strong some times and weak at other times. It stays for some period and when its hold is loosened, the seeker once again reverts to the old enslaved way of life. Such sporadic fits of courage or firmness are not of much use in the spiritual path. So, it is declared by the Lord that the '*Sattvic dhriti*' is unswerving, firm, immovable under all circumstances.

Question : *What is the nature of 'Sattvic Dhriti'?*

Answer : That courage by which man conquers all the internal forces and establishes himself firmly in the Self, is called Sattvic.

The 'Rajasic Dhriti' is explained.

34. यया तु धर्मकामार्थान्धृत्या धारयतेऽर्जुन ।
प्रसङ्गेन फलाकाङ्क्षी धृतिः सा पार्थ राजसी ॥ ३४

Yaya tu dharma kamarthan dhritya dharayate'rjuna ।
prasangena phalakankshi dhritih sa partha rajasi ॥ 34

Meaning : पार्थ *partha :* O Arjuna ! यया धृत्या तु *yaya dhritya tu :* but by which firmness, फलाकाङ्क्षी *phalakamkshi :* desirous of fruits, धर्मकामार्थान् *dharmakamarthan :* Dharma, Kama and Artha, प्रसङ्गेन *prasangena :* with great attachment, धारयते *dharayate :* performs, सा धृतिः *sa dhritih :* that courage, राजसी *rajasi :* (is) Rajasic.

Substance : O Arjuna ! that firmness by which, with attachment to the fruits of action, man holds to *Dharma*, wealth and desire, is called *Rajasic*.

Commentary : The aim of human life is fourfold (1) *Dharma*; (2) *Artha*, (3) *Kama*; (4) *Moksha*. Of these, the first three only are mentioned here. The fourth '*Moksha*' is not mentioned. From this, we understand that *Rajasic* courage does not think of liberation as the goal of life. So, from the point of spiritual realisation, this type of courage is not the highest. Only that courage which sees and knows the Truth as it is, is the highest. He who has it is the best of men. *Atmajnana* is the highest duty of man.

Prasangena : The *Rajasic* man is strongly attached to the fruits of action. Hence the emphatic form '*prasangena*' is used here.

Question : *What is the nature of Rajasic Dhriti ?*

Answer : That courage by which man performs actions with attachment to the fruits of Dharma, Kama and Artha is known as 'Rajasic Dhriti'.

The Tamasic 'dhriti' is explained.

35. यया स्वप्नं भयं शोकं विषादं मदमेव च ।
न विमुञ्चति दुर्मेधा धृतिः सा पार्थ तामसी ॥ ३५

Yaya svapnam bhayam sokam vishadam madam eva cha ।
na vimunchati durmedha dhritih sa partha tamasi ॥ 35

Meaning : पार्थ *partha :* O Arjuna ! यया *yaya :* by which firmness, दुर्मेधाः *durmedhah :* a stupid man, स्वप्नं *svapnam :* sleep, भयं *bhayam :* fear, शोकं *sokam :* grief, विषादं *vishadam :* despair, मदमेव च *madameva cha :* and also pride and conceit, न विमुञ्चति *na vinumchati :* does not abandon, सा धृतिः *sa dhritih :* that firmness, तामसी *tamasi :* (is) Tamasic (dark).

Substance : O Arjuna ! that by which a stupid man holds fast to sleep, fear, grief, despair and also pride and egoism is called *Tamasic.*

Commentary : Firmness is a virtue indeed. But it can be misused and produce evil effects. The *Tamasic* man is overcome by sleep, fear, grief and despair, and pride and conceipt never leave him. Thus his firmness wastes itself in self-destructive ways. Therefore, the true seeker should strive to attain spiritual virtues by a proper orientation of his mental attitude. He should strive to cultivate kindness, compassion, devotion and knowledge, and acquire God's grace. Sage Valmiki at first misused his faculties in evil ways. But later on, by his companionship with perfected men, he was able to know what was *Dharma*, and what God-realisation was, and from that onwards, he spent his life in singing the Glories of Rama and attained the highest state.

Durmedha : Intelligence is capable of gross misuse in every field of activity. The intelligence of the *Tamasic* men always runs in evil ways.

Svapnam : This word here refers to excessive sleep, and not the moderate rest of the body which is quite essential for normal and healthy life.

Question : *What is the nature of 'Tamasic Dhriti' ?*

Answer : It induces sleep, fear, grief and despair. It produces too much pride and self-conceipt.

The three-fold joy is explained and first the Sattvic.

36. सुखं त्विदानीं त्रिविधं शृणु मे भरतर्षभ ।
अभ्यासाद्रमते यत्र दुःखान्तं च निगच्छति ॥ ३६

Sukham tvidanim trividham srinu me bharatarshabha ।
abhyasad ramate yatra duhkhantam cha nigacchati ॥ 36

Meaning : भरतर्षभ *bharatarshabha :* O best of the Bharatas, Arjuna ! यत्र *yatra :* in which, अभ्यासात् *abhyasat :* by habit, रमते *ramate :* men finds joy, दुःखान्तं च *duhkhamtam cha :* and the cessation of pain, निगच्छति *nigacchati :* attains to, सुखं तु *sukham tu :* (that) joy indeed, इदानीं *idanim :* now, त्रिविधम् *trividham :* threefold, मे *me :* of Me, शृणु *srunu :* hear.

Substance : O Arjuna ! and now hear from Me the three-fold pleasure in which man finds delight by habit, and attains to the end of pain.

Commentary : *abhyasat* : The Lord declares that divine happiness (Brahmananda) is to be attained by practice. Realisation does not come to man by mere learning or power of speech. It is a practical science and should be understand by personal experience. Then alone man realises esteemed peace and bliss. Many people ask the question—"How can we realise *Atma*, transcend pain and suffering, and attain bliss" ? The Lord answers the question here. "Practise, and you shall attain that

state" says the Lord. Nothing can be achieved by mere talk and mere study of books. You can get butter only by churning the curd. You can get sweet juice only by crushing the sugar cane. Youcan get oil only by crushing the seeds. Therefore, by practice alone can man come to the end of pain and attain bliss.

Dukhantam cha nigacchati : This is the fundamental question for all living beings. Where is true joy and how is it to be attained ? From the lowest germs and worms upto the creator *Brahma*, this question is asked, and the answer to this question is escaping mankind inspite of repeated efforts to find it. Where is the place to search for true joy ? Is it anywhere in the world ? Can these objects of the material universe give it ? Can anybody purchase true joy with money or lands or kingdoms ? Man is searching for it with all his skill and intelligence. But he is not able to find it anywhere in the material objective world. True joy is only in *Atma*, in the Divine. Man finds true joy when the mind attains to the state of true *Sattva*. The moment when the mind reaches the *Sattvic* state, all sorrow comes to an end. So, the Lord's declaration should be constantly kept in mind, and man should know clearly that all *Rajasic* and *Tamasic* tendencies and actions lead to pain and sorrow. Thus knowing, he should strive his best to keep the mind in the *Sattvic* state and experience the bliss of *Atma*. By the constant practice of Divine virtues, by eliminating the ego, by constant contemplation of the real Self, man attains true joy which is the very essence of *Atma*.

Question : *What is the threefold pleasure ?*

Answer : (1) Sattvic; (2) Rajasic; (3) Tamasic.

Question : *What is the way to end sorrow ?*

Answer : Sorrow is transcended by the acquisition of Sattvic purity by constant practice.

The Sattvic pleasure is explained.

37. यत्तदग्रे विषमिव परिणामेऽमृतोपमम् ।
तत्सुखं सात्त्विकं प्रोक्तमात्मबुद्धिप्रसादजम् ॥ ३७

Yat tad agre visham iva parinama 'mritopamam |
tat sukham sattvikam proktam atmabuddhiprasadajam 37

Meaning : यत्तत् *yat tat* : which pleasure, अग्रे *agre* : in the beginning, विषमिव *visham iva* : like poison, परिणामे *parinama* : in the end, अमृतोपमम् *amritopamam* : (is) like nectar, आत्म बुद्धि प्रसादजम् *atmabuddhiprasadajam* : born of the purity of one's own mind, तत् सुखं *tat sukham* : that pleasure, सात्त्विकं *sattvikam* : pure, प्रोक्तम् *proktam* : is said.

Substance : That pleasure which is like poison at first but in the end is like nectar, born of the purity of one's own mind of Self-realisation, is declared to be *Sattvic*.

Commentary : In spiritual life, the practice of self-restraint, mind-control, and the destruction of impure tendencies produce a slight feeling of unrest, physical and mental pain. But the pain is turned into pure joy at the end. As the seeker acquires facility in *sadhana*, he begins to experience *Sattvic* joy. This is like nectar. The aspirant should never forget that the pain which he is enduring will yield the richest and the most plentiful joy in the end. So he should remain strong and determined and should not waver in continuing his *sadhana*. The pain is like poison, and certainly not poison (visham iva). The struggle with the impure tendencies accumulated in innumerable past births, would be naturally severe and painful, but the pain is only apparent and not real. This should be clearly kept in mind so that the seeker is not depressed by the painful experience of self-discipline in the early stages of the *sadhana*. The struggle is inevitable. It is a part of spiritual life and no one can hope to attain the highest without going through the conflict between the lower and higher natures. But one can rest assured that the higher nature is the real power behind everything and so it shall come out victorious in the end, however deep-roofed the impure *vasanas* might be in the mind of the *Sadhaka*. The apparent pain of self-denial is only the prelude to the attainment of *Brahmananda*.

For certain diseases very bitter medicines are administered. Though the medicine is bitter to the taste, it gives good health. One has to take the medicine for his own good. When a shapeless stone is transformed into a beautiful image of God, it receives the hard knocks of the sculptor's hammer. When a lump of gold is transformed into a beautiful ornament, it receives the sharp strokes of the jeweller's hammer. So also to attain *Brahmananda* man has to practise self-denial and sacrifice. The little sense pleasures which man gives up give him some pain in the beginning. They have been with him as relations in home during a long series of births. When they are given up, some slight pain is caused as when a dear relation passes away. The *Sadhaka* sholud not be disheartened. A little persistance and pursuance will bring about the necessary change and when the difficulty passes away the joy of the spirit begins to manifest slowly.

Hard work and study in student-life results in prosperity and joy in later life. We see that in the lives of many people. So also in spiritual life, the aspirant has to endure some initial discomfort and pain, and move forward with firm determination. He should not be deterred by the obstacles of the early passing phase. That is why the Lord here declares that '*sattvic* happiness' which apparantely appears painful contains the seeds of divine bliss. To throw away the inherent divine bliss by fear of the external discomforts would be very foolish. So, the seekers should constantly remind themselves of the pure bliss that awaits them when the initial obstacles are overcome by firm resistance, and indominatable will. One should be a hero on the spiritual path. The *Upanishads* declare that only a hero (*Dhirah*) can obtain the vision of *Paramatma*. The lives of Lord Buddha, Ramakrishna Paramahamsa and others reveal this truth. This Atmic bliss is not like the drink of the Gods which enables them to live longer than the mortals. It is pure nectar, conferring everlasting bliss unaffected by anything whatsoever. It takes mankind beyond the whirlpool of birth and death, and establishes in the original state of freedom and perfection.

Atmabuddhi prasadajam : This *Sattvic* joy is born of the purity of the intellect, freed from all sensual contacts, pleasures

and delusions. So, the seeker should keep the '*buddhi*' clean and clear, and thus he perceives, and experiences the bliss of *Atma*. Freedom from all sorrow and suffering is not to be found everywhere in the upper or the underworlds It is directly present in the purified '*Buddhi*'. Maharshi Vasishta declares the same truth in *Yogavasishta*.

Question : *What is the nature of Sattvic joy ?*

Answer : It appears bitter like poison in the beginning but turns out to be sweet and blissful like nectar in the end.

Question : *How can man experiences this bliss ?*

Answer : It flows from the purified intellect ('buddhi'). So, man has to give up the hankering for sense-pleasures and purify his mind.

Question : *What then is the duty of man ?*

Answer : He should not be deterred by the initial difficulties on the spiritual path, but continue his *Sadhana* with firm faith in God. He should wash the mind thoroughly of all impure tendencies which bind him to the material world.

Rajasic pleasure is explained.

38. विषयेन्द्रियसंयोगाद्यत्तदग्रेऽमृतोपमम् ।
परिणामे विषमिव तत्सुखं राजसं स्मृतम् ॥ ३८

Vishayendriyasamyogad yat tad agre'mritopamam ।
pariname visham iva tat sukham rajasam smritam ॥ 38

Meaning : यत् तत् *yat tat* : which pleasure, विषयेन्द्रिय संयोगात् *vishayendriyasamyogat* : by contact of the sense organs with objects, अग्रे *agre* : at first, अमृतोपमम् *amritopamam* : (is) like nectar, परिणामे *pariname* : in effect (after the enjoyment is over), विषमिव *visham iva* : like poison, (*bhavati* : becomes), तत् सुखं *tat sukham* : that pleasure, राजसं *rajasam* : Rajasic, स्मृतम् *smritam* : is said.

Substance : That pleasure arising from contact of the sense organs with objects, which is like nectar at first and which in effect is like poison, is declared to be *Rajasic.*

Commentary : Sense-pleasures are mometary. They are produced by the contact of sense organs with material objects. Moreover, the sense-pleasures, though they appear sweet and attractive on the surface, lead to pain, sorrow and suffering in the end. So, *Rajasic* pleasure is like a cup of poison with a thin film of milk over it. It is dangerous and fatal to seek it. Man is deluded by the superficial glitter and glamour of sense-attractions and rushes to his own destruction by running after them with foolish zeal and enthusiasm. Knowing it as such, who will pursue them ? Who will love them ? Who will hanker after them ? The wise man takes the hint from the Lord's command and abandons all unworthy ends and purposes in life.

All that glitters is not gold. The glitter of sense-pleasures is easily understood even by an uncritical mind in the daily course of human life. What is necessary is to pause for a moment and enquire into the nature of such pleasure and its consequence. Such enquiry repeatedly carried out will enable the seeker to know the true nature of the sense pleasures, and when it is known the mind ceases to run after them. Of course, by the force of past *samskaras*, man runs after such pleasures, and so a persistent and resolute effort is to be made to clear up the rubbish and make the mind clean and pure. Repeated efforts alone can turn the mind back from pursuing external objects. The path may be difficult, but not impossible. The Lord will sustain the effort of man and give him the necessary strength. Such is the Lord's assurance to the sincere seeker. No defeat, no despair, no pessimism, no lethargy can overtake the man of steady and unswerving faith.

Question : *What is the nature of Rajasic pleasure ?*

Answer : It appears sweet as nectar in the beginning and turns out to be poison in the end. Such is the nature of Rajasic pleasure.

Tamasic pleasure is declared.

39. यदग्रे चानुबन्धे च सुखं मोहनमात्मनः ।
निद्रालस्यप्रमादोत्थं तत्तामससुदाहृतम् ॥ ३९

Yad agre cha 'nubandhe cha sukham mohanam atmanah।
nidralasya pramadottham tat tamasam udahritam । 39

Meaning : निद्रालस्य प्रमादोत्थं *nidralasya pramadottam :* arising from sleep, lethargy, and error, यत् सुखं *yat sukham :* which pleasure, अग्रे च *agre cha :* in the beginning, अनुबन्धे च *anubandhe cha :* and in the sequel, (after enjoyment), आत्मनः *atmanah :* into one's self, मोहनम् *mohanam :* causing delusion, तत् *tat :* that (pleasure), तामसं *tamasam :* Tamasic, उदाहृतम् *udahritam :* is said.

Substance : That pleasure which arising from sleep, idleness, and error causes delusion during the enjoyment and in the sequel, is said to be *Tamasic.*

Commentary : Too much sleep, indolence, heedlessness are the marks of a *Tamasic* nature. Such a man live and die under the darkest delusion. Ignorance in its worst form clouds their minds and their actions are like those of beasts. Therefore *Tamasic* pleasure is of the worst type. Those who crave for it are not men at all. Their life is devoid of understanding. Precious human life is then wasted in beastly pleasures. The seed of ignorance continues to exert its power over man, and drives him on from birth to birth, everytime drawing man in the downward path of destruction. Therefore, those who are enlightened should follow the Lord's command and abandon all *Tamasic* and *Rajasic* pleasures. Holding on to *Sattva*, man should purify himself and rise to the highest state.

Question : *What is the nature of Tamasic pleasure ?*

Answer : It arises from sleep, indolence, and heedlessness. It causes delusion. During the time of enjoyment and in its sequel, it binds man to ignorance and delusion.

The Lord declares that there is no being free from these three Gunas in the three worlds.

40. न तदस्ति पृथिव्यां वा दिवि देवेषु वा पुनः ।
सत्त्वं प्रकृतिजैर्मुक्तं यदेभिः स्यात्त्रिभिर्गुणैः ॥ ४०

Na tad asti prithivyam va divi deveshu va punah ।
sattvam prakritijair muktam yad ebhih syat tribhir gunaih । 40

Meaning : प्रकृतिजैः *prakritijaih* : born of Prakriti (Maya), एभिः त्रिभिः गुणैः *ebhih tribhih gunaih* : from these three qualities, मुक्तं *muktam* : freed, सत्त्वं *sattvam* : being, यत् स्यात् *yat syat* : what is, तत् *tat* : that (being), पृथिव्याम् वा *prithivyam va* : either in the earth, पुनः *punah* : again, दिवि *divi* : in Heaven, देवेषु वा *deveshu va* : or among the Devas, नास्ति *nasti* : is not.

Substance : There is no being, either on the earth or in Heaven among the *Devas*, who is freed from the three qualities (*Gunas*) arising from *Prakriti (Maya)*.

Commentary : The Lord declares that there is no being anywhere in the three worlds, who is free from these three *gunas*. The Gods are also subject to these *gunas*. Only the *Jivanmukta* transcends the three *gunas*. So, to go to heaven does not solve the problem of bondage. The *Devas* are also bound by the three *Gunas*, and are not freed from the operation of the law of *Prakriti*. Sometime or other they too have to acquire the knowledge of *Atman* and get liberation.

Prakritijaih : From this, it is clear that the source of the three *Gunas* is *Prakriti* or *Maya* (ignorance). Contact with any one of these *Gunas* brings man under the power of *Prakriti*. Therefore the seeker should transcend *Rajas* and *Tamas* by unceasing personal effort, enter the region of *Sattva* and thereafter attain the transcendental Atmic State. That is *Moksha*.

Question : *From whence are born the three Gunas ?*

Answer : From Prakriti (Maya).

Question : *Is there any being free from these Gunas ?*

Answer : No. (except the Jivanmukta).

Question : *Does this apply to beings in other worlds ?*

Answer : Yes. Even the Devas are subject to the three Gunas.

People are divided into different castes by the predominance of these qualities in various degrees.

41. ब्राह्मणक्षत्रियविशां शूद्राणां च परंतप ।
कर्माणि प्रविभक्तानि स्वभावप्रभवैर्गुणैः ॥ ४१

Brahmanakshatriyavisam sudranam cha parantapa ।
karmani pravibhaktani svabhavaprabhavair gunaih । 41

Meaning : परन्तप *parantapa* : O Arjuna ! ब्राह्मण क्षत्रिय विशां *brahmana kshatriyavisam* : to the Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas, शूद्राणां च *sudranam cha* : and to the Sudras, कर्माणि *karmani* : duties, स्वभाव प्रभवैः *svabhavaprabhavaih* : born of their nature (according to their previous experiences in former births), गुणैः *gunaih* : by qualities, प्रविभक्तानि *pravibhaktani* : are separately determined.

Substance : O Arjuna! works for the different castes (Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas and Sudras) are variously determined according to their nature born of *Prakriti*.

Commentary : In the Fourth Discourse (13th verse), the Lord already declared that the differentiation of the castes is determined by the difference in the nature of men. (*chaturvarnyam maya srishtam gunakarma vibhagasah*). Here again the Lord states that the difference among the castes is due to qualities differently exhibited according to their nature. So, the accident of birth is not the real criterion to fix the special gradation of the caste system. It shows that caste is no bar for any one who aspires for Self-realisation. Though the birth is apparently in the lower castes, yet man can ascend to great spiritual heights by the purity of his character and conduct. The

Gita thus throws open the gates of *Brahmajnana* to all people who are qualified for it by virtue of their inherent predispositions and acquired merit. The accident of birth is of very little significance.

Question : *How are the four castes formed ?*

Answer : By their qualities.

Question : *How are the duties of each caste determined ?*

Answer : By the tendencies with which people are born.

Question : *Is the caste determined by birth ?*

Answer : No. It is determined by their nature, and according to their nature their duties and functions in society are fixed.

Functions of each caste are declared.

42. शमो दमस्तपः शौचं क्षान्तिरार्जवमेव च ।
ज्ञानं विज्ञानमास्तिक्यं ब्राह्मं कर्म स्वभावजम् ॥ ४२

Samo damas tapah saucham kshantir arjavam eva cha
jnanam vijnanam astikyam brahmam karma svabavajam 42

Meaning : शमः *samah* : self-control (control of the mind), दमः *damah* : control of the physical organs, तपः *tapah* : austerity, शौचं *saucham* : purity, क्षान्तिः *kshantih* : forgiveness, आर्जवमेव च *arjavam eva cha* : and also uprightness, ज्ञानम् *jnanam* : knowledge, विज्ञानम् *vijnanam* : realisation, आस्तिक्य *astikyam* : faith in God, Guru and the Scriptures, स्वभावजम् *svabhavajam* : born of nature, ब्राह्मं कर्म *brahmankarma* : duties of the Brahmanas.

Substance : Control of the internal and external organs, autserity, purity, forgiveness, integrity, knowledge of the *Sastras*, direct experience of the truth, faith in God, Guru and the Scriptures- these are the duties of the Brahmins born of their own nature.

Commentary : Any one who is able to conform to the above nine prescribed duties is a Brahmana. The austerity (*tapah*) mentioned here refers to the three types of penance mentioned in the 17th Discourse. (14th, 15th and 16th verses).

Apart from knowledge of the *Sastras*, direct experience of Truth is emphasised by the Lord on several occasions. Mere knowledge of the *Sastras* is not enough. Realisation is absolutely necessary.

Question : *What are the duties of the Brahmanas born of their nature ? (Or what are the qualities which determine the nature of Brahmanas ?)*

Answer : (1) Serenity; (2) control of the external and internal organs; (3) austerity; (4) purity; (5) forgiveness; (6) uprightness; (7) knowledge; (8) realisation; (9) faith in God, Guru and Scriptures. These nine qualities are natural to the Brahmanas, or those who possess these qualities are Brahmanas.

The duties of the Kshatriyas are stated.

43. शौर्यं तेजो धृतिर्दाक्ष्यं युद्धे चाप्यपलायनम् ।
दानमीश्वरभावश्च क्षात्रं कर्म स्वभावजम् ॥ ४३

Sauryam tejo dhritir dakshyam yuddhe cha'py apalayanam
danam isvarabhavas cha kshatram karma svabhavajam 43

Meaning : शौर्यं *souryam* : prowess, तेजः *tejah* : splendour, धृतिः *dhritih* : firmness, दाक्ष्यं *dakshyam* : dexterity, युद्धे *yuddhe* : in battle, अपलायनम् अपि च *apalayanam api cha* : and not flying also, दानम् *danam* : generosity, ईश्वरभावश्च *isvarabhavah cha* : and lordliness, स्वभावजम् *svabhavajam* : born of their nature, क्षात्रं *kshatram* : of Kshatriyas, कर्म *karma* : action.

Substance : Prowess, splendour (greatness), firmness, dexterity, not running away in battle, magnanimity, lordship (commanding and ruling power)-these are the functions of *Kshatriyas* born of their nature.

Commentary : *Yuddhe cha pyapalayanam* : A true *kshatriya* is not expected to fly from field of battle. But an external conflict like war happens only from time to time. The internal struggle between the forces of good and evil, of light and darkness, of the pious and the diabolical, is taking place continously in the heart of every human being. The struggle is continuous and unceasing till final liberation is attained. Every human being needs the *Dharma* of the *Kshatriya* to remain firm, bold and unyielding, in the struggle with evil and ignorance. There should be no backward step, no looking back, no relaxation of effort, and no feeling of defeat and frunstration 'March onwards' is the command till the goal is reached. It is only then that man can attain the rulership of the Empire of Freedom. So man should strive for the light of the Brahmana and the power of the *Kshatriya.*

Question : *What are the functions of the Kshatriyas* ?

Answer : Prowess, splendour (greatness), firmness, dexterity, not running away in battle, magnanimity, lordship (commanding and ruling power)-these are the functions of the Kshatriyas born of their nature.

The functions of the Vysyas and the Sudras are stated.

44. कृषिगोरक्षवाणिज्यं वैश्यं कर्म स्वभावजम् ।
परिचर्यात्मकं कर्म शूद्रस्यापि स्वभावजम् ॥ ४४

Krishi goraksha vanijyam vaisyamkarma svabhavajam।
paricharyatmakam karma sudrasya'pi svabhavajam॥ 44

Meaning : कृषिगोरक्ष वाणिज्यं *krishigorakshavanijyam* : agriculture, cattle-rearing and trade, स्वभावजम् *svabhavajam* : born of (their) nature, वैश्यं कर्म *vyaisyamkarma* : the duties of the Vysya, अपि *api* : and, परिचर्यात्मकं *paricharyatmakam* : consisting of service, कर्म *karma* : action, शूद्रस्य *sudrasya* : of the Sudra, स्वभावजम् *svabhavajam* : born of nature.

Substance : Agriculture, cattle-rearing and trade are the duties of the Vysyas, born of their nature; action consisting of service is the duty of the Sudras.

Question : *What are the duties of the Vysyas* ?

Answer : (1) Agriculture; (2) Cattle-rearing; (3) Trade

Question : *What is the duty of the Sudras* ?

Answer : Service.

The Lord declares that people following their respective duties acquire the merit of realising the Truth.

45. स्वे स्वे कर्मण्यभिरतः संसिद्धिं लभते नरः।
स्वकर्मनिरतः सिद्धिं यथा विन्दति तच्छृणु ॥ ४५

Sve sve karmany abhiratah samsiddhim labhate narah।
svakarmaniratah siddhim yatha vindati tacchrinu॥ 45

Meaning : स्वे स्वे कर्मणि *sve sve karmani* : in one's own duty (above-mentioned), अभिरतः *abhiratah* : devoted, नरः *narah* : man, संसिद्धिं *samsiddhim* : perfection, लभते *labhate* : attains, स्वकर्मनिरतः *svakarmaniratah* : engaged in one's own duty, यथा *yatha* : how, सिद्धिं *siddhim* : perfection, विन्दति *vindati* : (he) finds, तत् *tat* : that, शृणु *srinu* : hear.

Substance : Each devoted to his own duty, man attains perfection; Engaged in one's own duty, how man attains the highest good, that do you hear.

Commentary : Devoted to the duties and functions of his own caste derived from his own nature, man can attain the highest perfection. How this miracle is achieved is the secret of *Karma Yoga.* These duties should be performed in the true spirit of surrendering the fruit to the Lord. By performing one's own duties without attachment to the fruits, man releases himself from the binding effects of *Karma* which is the cause of *Samsara.* Since the majority of men are compelled by their very nature to engage themselves in their respective duties, the best way for such is to continue their work in a spirit of self-surrender to the Lord. By such detached action, the mind is purified and the Self is realised. Thus *Karma* is the way to *Atmajnana* through the purification of the mind.

Question : *How does man attain perfection while engaged in his own duty?*

Answer : By performing his prescribed duties and functions without attachment and in the true spirit of self-surrender to the Lord, man attains perfection.

The Lord explains how man attains the merit of Self-realisation while engaged in his prescribed duties.

46. यतः प्रवृत्तिर्भूतानां येन सर्वमिदं ततम्।
स्वकर्मणा तमभ्यर्च्य सिद्धिं विन्दति मानवः ॥ ४६

Yatah pravrittir bhutanam yena sarvam idam tatam ।
svakarmana tam abhyarchya siddhim vindati manavah ॥ 46

Meaning : यतः *yatah* : from whom, भूतानां *bhutanam* : of beings, प्रवृत्तिः *pravrittih* : manifestation or evolution, येन *yena* : by whom, इदं सर्वं *idam sarvam* : all this, ततं *tatam* : is pervaded, तम् *tam* : him, मानवः *manavah* : man, स्वकर्मणा *svakarmana* : with one's own duty, अभ्यर्च्य *abhyarchya* : worshipping, सिद्धिं *siddhim* : perfection, विन्दति *vindati* : attains.

Substance : From whom is the manifestation and evolution of beings, by whom all this is pervaded, worshipping Him by performing one's own duty, man attains perfection.

Commentary : *Yatah pravrittir bhutanam* : It is clear that *Paramatma* is the origin and source of all beings. All beings come from Him and return to Him. *Paramatma* is the vital Intelligence Principle without which insentient *Prakriti* can do nothing. Therefore the worship of *Paramatma* is the highest duty of man in whom *Paramatma* is manifesting in the highest degree.

Yena saravam idam tatam : All this is pervaded by the Lord. This declaration is made thrice in the Gita. *Paramatma* is present everywhere, like cream in milk. He is not seen with

the external eye, but to the eye of knowledge He is visible. He is 'Sarvasakshi', the Seer of everything, because He is present in the innermost core of everybeing. So realising, man should be pure in thought and deed, and should be devoted to Him who is the origin and source of his very being.

Svakarmana tam abhyarcha : The performance of one's own duty is itself the worship of the Lord. This is the excellence of *Karmayoga*. The tiller in the field, the worker in the factory, the judge in the court, the minister in the cabinet, the trader, the cobbler, in fact, every man who is engaged in some form of work or other, can transform and sublimate that work into worship of the Lord by offering it to Him–the action and its fruits all together. Thus every step that he takes, every breath that he breathes, every action that he does becomes worship of the Lord. Such worship automatically purifies the mind, because the mind is agitated only when man becomes attached to his work for selfish ends and by selfish motives. He who can maintain the attitude of detachment and surrender remains restful and lives in peace. Such peace leads to the vision of *Paramatma*. Of all the methods mentioned to purify the mind, this is the best and most easy to practise. As man is engaged in some form of work, the ideal is to perform it as worship of the Lord, free from fear and anxiety, free from binding egotism and binding selfishness.

Thus *Karma* becomes, the means to *Moksha*. *Karma* binds only when the performer desires to obtain this or that fruit either in this world or in other worlds. Man knows in his heart of hearts that he is attached to work by contemplating the pleasure of enjoying the rewards. This should be given up by the true seeker whose will is set on the realisation of ultimate perfection. The Lord declares that man attains perfection by following the principle of detached performance of one's own duty.

This verse explains the combination of *Karma*, *Bhakti* and *Jnana*.

1) **Performance of action (*Karma*)**

2) Worship of the Lord through action (*Bhakti*)

3) Purification of the mind which brings about self-realisation (*Jnana*)

Question : *What is the source of all beings ?*

Answer : Paramatma.

Question : *By whom is this universe pervaded ?*

Answer : By Paramatma.

Question : *How can the Jiva attain perfection ?*

Answer : If a man performs his prescribed duties in the spirit of the worship of the Lord, surrendering the fruits to him, he gets purification of mind and when the mind is purified, he attains Brahmajnana.

The Lord declares the excellence of performing one's own duties and functions.

47. श्रेयान्स्वधर्मो विगुणः परधर्मात्स्वनुष्ठितात् ।
स्वभावनियतं कर्म कुर्वन्नाप्नोति किल्बिषम् ॥ ४७

Sreyan svadharmo vigunah paradharmat svanushthitat ।
svabhavaniyatam karma kurvan na 'pnoti kilbisham ॥ 47

Meaning : स्वधर्मः *svadharmah :* one's own duty, विगुणः *vigunah (api) :* though destitute of merits, अनुष्ठितात् *anushthitat :* well done, परधर्मात् *paradharmat :* than the duty of another, श्रेयान् *sreyan :* better, स्वभावनियतं *svabhavaniyatam :* ordained by his own nature, कर्म *karma :* action, कुर्वन् *kurvan :* performing, किल्बिषम् *kilbisham :* sin, न आप्नोति *na apnoti :* does not incur.

Substance : Better is one's own duty though destitute of merits or incomplete than the duty of another well performed;

the man who performs action ordained by his own nature does not incur sin.

Commentary : The Lord declares that one should not give up his prescribed duty though it appears difficult to perform it fully and completely. The duties of another man appear easy and attractive, but the true seeker should stick to his own method and way of life. This is certainly better than abandoning one's own duty and taking up another's and doing it even meritoriously. We have to refer this statement to Arjuna's original plea to abandon fighting and to live the life of a mendicant. Arjuna is a Kshatriya and his duty born of his own nature is to fight. He should not give up this duty. He should perform it in the true spirit of a *Karma-Yogi*. By doing so, he does not incur sin. The principle holds good to all men engaged in various forms of work each according to his nature.

The verse may be interpreted in another way. '*Svadharma*' may be taken to mean '*Atma-dharma*'. To think of *Atma* and meditate on that may appear difficult, and living the life of the senses in the objective world may be easy. But the real seeker should continue the '*Atma-dharma*' inspite of difficulties and failures. In fact '*Atma-dharma*' is the real state of man, and life in the senses and the objective world is an alien imposition,–'*paradharma*'. Though '*paradharma*' appears easy and pleasing for the time being, it leads to bondage and sorrow in the end. '*Atma-dharma*' on the other hand, though appearing to be difficult and troublesome in the beginning, leads to bliss and liberation in the end. So '*Atma-dharma*' is infinitely better than '*Paradharma*'.

Question : *What 'Dharma' is better for man ?*

Answer : That which is born of his own nature and pertains to his own state is better than the functions of another state.

Question : *By what does man escape from sin ?*

Answer : By performing one's own duties in a spirit of surrender to the Lord, man does not incur sin.

The Lord declares that man should not abandon his 'dharma' even though it is beset with faults.

48. सहजं कर्म कौन्तेय सदोषमपि न त्यजेत् ।
सर्वारम्भा हि दोषेण धूमेनाग्निरिवावृताः ॥ ४८

Sahajam karma kaunteya sadosham api na tyajet ।
sarvarambha hi doshena dhumena'gnir iva'vritah ॥ 48

Meaning : कौन्तेय *kaunteya :* O Arjuna ! सहजं *sahajam :* born of one's own nature, कर्म *karma :* action, सदोषमपि *sadosham api :* though beset with evil (either material or objective), न त्यजेत् *na tyajet :* should not be abandoned, धूमेन *dhumena :* by smoke, अग्निः इव *agnih iva :* like fire, सर्वारम्भाः *sarvarambhah :* all actions, दोषेण *doshena :* by evil, आवृताः हि *avritah hi :* are enveloped indeed.

Substance : O Arjuna ! one should not abandon the duty to which he is born, though it is attended with evil; all undertakings are indeed enveloped by evil, like fire by smoke.

Commentary : As action is performed by the senses and the physical organs, it is within the region of the objective world, conditioned by the three *Gunas*. Therefore all action is attended with some form of evil or other. All action is 'Anatma'; it is objective, and it is corrupted by the *Gunas*, and so all action partakes of evil. Fire is enveloped by smoke. There can be no fire without the covering veil of smoke. In spite of it, one should not abandon the duty to which he is born, because if it is performed with detachment and in a spirit of surrender to the Lord, it purifies the mind and leads to liberation.

The inevitable evils attendant in all action are purified by various rites and ritnals. Enquiry into the nature of Brahman, mediation, and other sanctified methods of spiritual practice will wash off the impurities clinging to the mind. Therefore one should continue to act in the condition in which he is placed, without attachment to fruits thereof and in a spirit of self-surrender. That man attains the highest state.

Having discussed the different aspects of Karmayoga the Lord now explains the nature of Karma-sannyasa-the abandonment of Karma.

49. असक्तबुद्धिः सर्वत्र जितात्मा विगतस्पृहः ।
नैष्कर्म्यसिद्धिं परमां संन्यासेनाधिगच्छति ॥ ४९

Asaktabuddhih sarvatra jitatma vigatasprihah ।
naishkarmyasiddhim paramam sannyasena'dhigacchati ॥ 49

Meaning : सर्वत्र *sarvatra:* everywhere, in all things and matters, असक्त बुद्धिः *asaktabuddhih :* whose intellect is unattached, (free from thoughts of 'I and mine'), जितात्मा *jitatma :* whose mind is subdued, विगतस्पृहः *vigatasprihah :* who is free from desires, संन्यासेन *sannyasena :* by abandoning all attachment (or by surrendring the fruits of action, or by the path of Jnana), परमां *paramam :* supreme, नैष्कर्म्य सिद्धिं *naishkarmyasiddhim :* actionless state of Atma, अधिगच्छति *adhigacchati :* attains.

Substance : He whose intellect is unattached, who has subdued his self, whose desires are quelled, by renunciation attains the supreme actionless state of *Atma*.

Commentary : Having propounded the principle of *Nishkama karma yoga*, the Lord now explains the doctrine of *Jnana Yoga* which frees man finally from all kinds of action and takes him to the actionless state of *Atma*. Three qualities are mentioned here.

1) Intellect which is not entangled in anything whatsoever;

2) self-conquest;

3) desirelessness.

Sarvatra :- The detachment of the seeker should be complete.

There should not be the least trace of attachment to any material object. It is possible to remain detached in a state of *Dhyana*, but when the mind is released and begins to function in the external world, the same old desires and attachments come

up to bind the person again. So, it is instructed to remain free from attachment under all conditions of life.

Jivatma : The conqueror of one's own self is the master of the whole universe, and the conquerer of all the worlds remains bound if he is a slave of his own self. So, the internal enemies should be subdued and annihilated. Otherwise they trouble the people like the thorn in the throat of the feeder. They never allow them to be happy and free, whatever may be their worldly possessions.

Vigatasprihah : He is free from the desire to enjoy the pleasures which he had experienced formerly; and which remain in his memory as a deep-rooted longing. The mind is disturbed by such pleasurable memories and the longing to possess them again and again. Only when there are no longings and desires the mind remains steady and firm.

Naishkarmyasiddhim : *Moksha* is here described as 'naishkarmyasiddhi' (i.e.) the state when there are no actions either external or internal. As the *Atmic* state is beyond the body and mind, no action is possible for the man of Self-realisation. He remains as '*Atma*' and *Atma* alone is Such state is acquired by *Sannyasa* (i. e.) renunciation. Renunciation of what ?– of the fruit of action, of desires, of all attachments. Therefore, it follows that by relinquishing the fruits of action, all attachments and desires drop off gradually, and man thereby attains *Moksha.*

Paramam : Supreme. The Atmic state is the highest state, beyond all miraculous achievements.

Question : *What is Naishkarmasiddhi* ?

Answer : It is the actionless state of Atma.

Question : *How is it attained* ?

Answer : That state is attained (1) by the intellect purified of all attachment; (2) by the conquest of the mind (3) by renunciation of all actions with the fruits thereof.

Question : *What is the state of Moksha* ?

Answer : It is the highest state of perfection and freedom.

Question : *How can Karma lead to Naishkarmya* ?

Answer : Karma performed without attachment to the fruits thereof purifies the mind, and when the mind; is purified and mastery is obtained over self, the pure actionless state of Atma is realised.

50. सिद्धिं प्राप्तो यथा ब्रह्म तथाप्नोति निबोध मे ।
समासेनैव कौन्तेय निष्ठा ज्ञानस्य या परा ॥ ५०

Siddhim prapto yatha brahma tatha'pnoti nibodha me
samasenai'va kaunteya nishtha jnanasya ya para ॥ 50

Meaning : कौन्तेय *kaunteya* : O Arjuna, सिद्धिं *siddhim* : perfection in action, प्राप्तः *praptah* : one who has attained, यथा *yatha* : how; ब्रह्म *brahma* : Brahman, आप्नोति *apnoti* : obtains, तथा *tatha* : that manner, ज्ञानस्य *jnanasya* : of knowledge, परा *para* : supreme, निष्ठा *nishtha* : condition or final goal, या *ya* : which, समासेनैव *samasenaiva* : briefly even, मे *me* : from Me, निबोध *nibodha* : learn.

Substance : O Arjuna! learn from Me in brief how reaching perfection in action, man attains Brahman, the consummation of supreme knowledge.

Commentary : This is the closing part of the Gita in which the Lord states in clear terms the method and goal of supreme knowledge. The seekers should go through this part most carefully as the essence of the Gita is given here.

Samaseniva : The brevity of the Lord's declaration shows that He is summing up his teaching so far given in elaborate and explanatory form. The seeker indeed wants to know in a nutshell, the sum and substance of the Lord's teaching. The formula of supreme knowledge is found in the following three verses. And so, they are spoken of as Sankshipta Gita.

Realisation of Brahman and the consummation of knowledge are stated.

51. बुद्ध्या विशुद्धया युक्तो धृत्यात्मानं नियम्य च ।
शब्दादीन्विषयांस्त्यक्त्वा रागद्वेषौ व्युदस्य च ॥ ५१

52. विविक्तसेवी लघ्वाशी यतवाक्कायमानसः ।
ध्यानयोगपरो नित्यं वैराग्यं समुपाश्रितः ॥ ५२

53. अहङ्कारं बलं दर्पं कामं क्रोधं परिग्रहम् ।
विमुच्य निर्ममः शान्तो ब्रह्मभूयाय कल्पते ॥ ५३

Buddhya visuddhaya yukto dhritva'tmanam niyamya cha ।
sabdadin vishayam styaktva ragadveshau vyudasya cha ॥ 51

Viviktasevi laghvasi yatavakkayamanasah ।
dhyanayogaparo nityam vairagyam samupasritah ॥ 52

Ahamkaram balam darpam
kamam krodham parigraham ।
vimuchya nirmamah santo
brahmabhuyaya kalpate ॥ 53

Meaning: विशुद्धया *visuddhaya:* pure, बुद्ध्या *buddhya:* with understanding, युक्तः *yuktah:* endowed, धृत्या *dhritya:* with firmness, आत्मानं *atmanam:* self, नियम्य *niyamya:* controlling, च *cha:* and, शब्दादीन् विषयान् *sabdadin vishayan:* sound and other sense-objects, त्यक्त्वा *tyaktva:* giving up, रागद्वेषौ *ragadveshau:* attraction and hatred, व्युदस्य च *vyudasya cha:* abandoning, and, विविक्तसेवी *viviktasevi:* dwelling in solitude, लघ्वाशी *laghvasi:* eating but little, यत वाक्काय मानसः *yatavakkayamanasah:* speech, body and mind subdued, नित्यं *nityam:* always, ध्यानयोग परः *dhyanayogaparah:* engaged in meditation, वैराग्यं *vairagyam:* dispassion, समुपाश्रितः *samupasritah:* taking refuge in, अहङ्कारं *ahamkaram:* egotism, बलं *balam:* animal strength, दर्पं *darpam:* arrogance, कामं *kamam:* desire, क्रोधं *krodham:* anger, परिग्रहम् *parigraham:* covetousness,

विमुच्य *vimuchya:* having renounced, निर्ममः *nirmamah:* self-less, शान्तः *santah:* peaceful, ब्रह्मभूयाय *brahmabhuyaya:* for becoming Brahman, कल्पते *kalpate:* is fit.

Substance: Endowed with pure understanding, firmly controlling one's self, turning away from sound and other sense-objects, and abandoning attraction and hatred,

dwelling in solitude, eating but little, speech, body and mind subdued, always engaged in meditation, taking refuge in dispassion,

having abandoned egotism, violence, arrogance, desire, anger, greed, free from the notion of 'I' and 'mine', ever in peace-he (such a man) is fit to realise Brahman.

Commentary: It is said that these three verses contain the essence of the Gita. All that is required for man to attain the highest realisation is stated here. The method and the means and also the goal are declared here. As the goal is no less than *Brahma-sakshatkara*, the aspiring soul should cultivate every one of these virtues slowly and gradually, and climb the highest peak of spiritual illumination.

Visuddhaya: Purity should be perfect, (i. e.) not a speck of worldly dust should cover the mind. Certainly, when the mirror is cleaned well, the reflection is clear !

Dhritya: Firmness of self-control is essential. It is not easy to curb the disturbances of the mind. Courage, steadfastness and iron-will are needed to subdue the mind. *Atma* is not attained by the weak and the lazy. The couragious (*dhirah*) alone can obtain the vision of *Brahman*.

Atmanam niyamya: Control of mind and senses is the very basis of spiritual life. There is no other way to liberation except through victory over the distractions of the mind and attractions of the senses. That is why it is clearly stated—'Give up sense-objects' (*sabdadin vishayamstyktva*). The outgoing

mind should be drawn within, to look into the innermost regions of the heart and remain settled in the contemplation of the Self.

Viviktasevi : The aspirant should live in an atmosphere of solitude. The place may be in one's own home if he is a householder. A small apartment should be chosen where he can carry on his *sadhana* uninterupted. A crouded place full of noises is uncongenial for peaceful contemplation in the early stages of spiritual life. Hence dwelling in solitude is mentioned here.

Laghvasi : Moderation in food is essential for spiritual practice. Over-eating or too much fasting are both undesirable for the health of the body as well as the mind. Agreeable food in moderate quantity should be the rule. Food not only sustains the body but also controls the quality of the mind. In the previous Discourse the threefold types of food are clearly explained. The seeker should cultivate a *Sattvic* mind, and for that purpose he should adopt *Sattvic* type of nourishment. These three verses being the very essence of the Gita, we can understand the degree of importance attached to physical nourishment in the scheme of spiritual progress.

Yatavakkayamanasah : Control of speech, body and mind is another essential quality of the spiritual seeker. By devotion and discrimination, he should bring under control the entire physical body, the whole of the mental organism and the organ of speech which can cause mental distruction if left unchecked.

Dhyanayagaparonityam : Continuous meditation on the Self is necessary for the highest realisation. By systematic practice, such continuity of meditation can be acquired. In the beginning, the seeker is likely to allow the mind freely in the sense-world after a bit of concentration and meditation. Thus the effect of the former is neutralised by the latter. So incessant practice is necessary. Even when he is working in the world, he should try to retain the calm, peaceful and *Sattvic* atmosphere of the meditation state.

Vairagyam samupasritah : The word '*samupasritah*' show the firmness of dispassion that should be practised by the seeker. Lukeworm dispassion is easily overwhelmed by sense-attractions. Sankara says in the *Vivekachudamani*-The aspiring soul of weak dispassion who tries to cross the ocean of *samsara* is held by the neck and turned back by the sea-monster of worldly temptations and sensual desires.

Balam : Here the word implies animal strength and violence, the asuric force of the *Rakshasas*, arising from the egoistic conscience of one's own superiority over others. The strength used for divine purpose is good. Expenditure of energy for unwholesome ends obstinately held should be abandoned.

Kamam Krodham : These twin words occur several times in the Gita. They are mortal enemies of man. They function together. '*Kama*' is the origin of '*Krodha*' (Kamat Krodhobhijayate). These two evils should be destroyed root and branch.

Parigraham : (i. e.) Receiving gifts from others. The essential necessities of life got from charitable people may be accepted to sustain life. To seek for more is greed and covetousness. Not only does the receivar burdens himself with the bad *Karma* of the giver, but he also yields to the temptations of worldly pleasure by the acquisition of enjoyable things. So this evil should be given up along with the other evils mentioned in that line "Ahamkaram Balam..."

Vimuchya : Complete rejection of all the evils mentioned is implied.

Brahmabhuyaya kalpate : The aspirant becomes fit to realise Brahman when he acquires the virtues and abandons the evils mentioned in the three verses.

Question : *What is the way to Brahma sakshatkara ? How should the aspirant act ?*

Answer : 1) He should purify the understanding.

2) He should firmly control the mind;

3) He should abandon all sense-objects which draw the mind out into the material world.

4) He should give up attraction and hatred.

5) He should dwell in solitude.

6) His diet should be moderate

7) He should keep his speech, body and mind under his control.

8) He should practise meditation continuously.

9) He should possess intense dispassion.

10) He should abandon egoism, violence, arrogance, desire, hatred and covetousness.

11) He should give up the sense of 'I' and 'mine'.

12) He should possess peace.

Question : *How should man control the senses ?*

Answer : With firm will and courage.

Question : *Who is fit for Brahmajnana ?*

Answer : He who possesses the above mentioned qualities is fit for Brahma-jnana.

The conduct of the Brahma-Jnana is explained.

54. ब्रह्मभूतः प्रसन्नात्मा न शोचति न काङ्क्षति ।
समः सर्वेषु भूतेषु मद्भक्तिं लभते पराम् ॥ ५४

Brahmabhutah prasannatma na sochati na kankshati ।
samah sarveshu bhuteshu madbhaktim labhate param । 54

Meaning : ब्रह्मभूतः *brahmabhutah :* Brahman-become, Jivanmukta, प्रसन्नात्मा *prasannatma :* the serene minded, न शोचति *na sochati :* grieves not, न काङ्क्षति *na kamkshati :* not desires, सर्वेषु भूतेषु *sarveshu bhuteshu :* to all beings, समः *samah :* equal, पराम् *param :* supreme, मद्भक्तिं *madbhaktim :* devotion unto me, लभते *labhate :* obtains.

Substance : Becoming Brahman, serene-minded, neither grieving nor desiring, the same to all beings, (he) obtains supreme devotion to Me.

Commentary : The serene-minded man of knowledge has nothing to seek for nor grieve for. He is the same to all beings, (i.e.) he does not see any distinction of high and low among the beings of the universe. Angles, men, animals, the creeping and corwling beings, all have the same significance from the stand-point of the highest.

Na sochati na kamkshati : When it is known that the phenomenal universe is created in *Atma* by the power of *Maya*, when the whole universe is seen as only one infinitesimal part of *Atma*, what can any man desire, and for what does he grieve.

Yasmin sarvani bhutani
atmaivabhut vijanatah
tatra ko mohah kah soka
ekatva manupasyatah (*Isavasya upanishad*)

Samah sarveshu bhuteshu : Love for all beings is the mark of a sage, or a knower of Brahman. He is equal-minded towards all beings because he sees the Self everywhere without any exception whatsoever. Therefore Self-realisation and universal love go together. When one is acquired the other is there spontaneously. That is why the Lord declares that the noble soul of Self-realisation acts with deep compassion for all beings.

Madbhaktim labhate param : This is the basic truth regarding *Jnana* and *Bhakti*. The ultimate realisation through the *Bhakti-marga* and *Jnana-marga* is the same. That is why the Lord here states that the knower of Brahman attains supreme devotion to Him.

Bhakti is of two kinds according to the degree of its intensity- (1) Ordinary (Samanya) *Bhakti*; (2) supreme (Para)

bhakti. The second is the same as the highest state of *Brahma-jnana*.

Sankara defines *Bhakti* in the following terms.

Svaswarupanu sandhanam
bhaktirityabhidhiyate.

According to this definition, the ceaseless contemplation of *Atma* is devotion. Therefore no real difference can be maintained between devotion and knowledge. Moreover it is said here that the man of highest self-realisation is full of the deepest devotion to the Lord. In Prahlada we find the embodiment of *Jnana* and *Bhakti* harmonised in the highest state.

Question : *What is the nature of Brahma-jnani ?*

Answer : He is pure and serene-minded. He neither grieves nor desires. He has the same outlook towards himself and all beings.

Question : *What does that sage obtain ?*

Answer : He obtains single-minded devotion to the Lord

Through devotion, knowledge and through knowledge union with the Lord will be obtained.

55. भक्त्या मामभिजानाति यावान्यश्चास्मि तत्त्वतः ।
तततो मां तत्त्वतो ज्ञात्वा विशते तदनन्तरम् ॥ ५५

Bhaktya mam abhijanati yavan yas cha'smi tattvatah ।
tato mam tattvato jnatva visate tad anantaram ॥ 55

Meaning : भक्त्या *bhaktya* : through devotion, माम् *mam* : Me, तत्त्वतः *tattvatah* : in essence, यावान् *yavan* : what I am, यश्च अस्मि *yascha asmi* : and who I am, अभिजानाति *abhijanati* : knows, ततः *tatah* : then, माम् *mam* : Me, तत्त्वतः *tattvatah* : in essence, ज्ञात्वा *jnatva* : having known, तदनन्तरम् *tadanantaram* : afterwards, विशते *visate* : enters.

Substance : By devotion he knows Me in essence, what I am and who I am; then having known Me in truth, he forthwith enters into Me.

Commentary : In the previous verse, it is said that knowledge leads to the highest devotion; and here it is said that devotion helps to know the Lord in truth, what He is and who He is. Therefore it is perfectly clear that devotion and knowledge sustain and strengthen each other mutually. The perfect knower of Brahman is also the perfect *Bhakta*, and the perfected *Bhakta* is also the sage of supreme wisdom. The great Sankara who propounded the highest truth that there is only One and not two, and so there is neither a devotee nor one to be devoted to, was himself the greatest of devotees, and his prayers, adorations and outpourings of heart constitute a perennial flood of sweet *Bhakti* (worship) of the Lord. In the Seventh Chapter seventeenth verse–(*'ekabhaktir visishyate'*) it is declared that the sage of true wisdom excels by his single-minded devotion

Abhijanati : Knows Me well. Knowledge arises from deep love. One cannot truly know anything that he does not love. If he wants to understand the sufferings of the poor he should love them, and that love helps him to know their difficulties, pains and sorrows truly. Mere charity without feeling is not of much value from this point of view. The mother knows the child because she loves him. The devotee knows the Lord, because he loves Him As this love deepens and when the devotee enjoys the blissful nature of the Lord, he gradually enters that realm of supreme bliss, coming closer and closer to his choosen Deity, till he disappears and the Deity alone remains. It is like the salt doll dissolving in the ocean.

Jnatum drashtum cha tattvena praveshtum cha
paramtapa (11–54)

It is only there and not before that the Lord is fully known. Such knowledge comes to man through devotion. From this, two important aspects of spiritual realisation are revealed—

1) By knowledge alone liberation is attained;

2) By devotion (*Bhakti*) alone such knowledge is obtained. Therefore, it is clear that for all true seekers after liberation, devotion to the Lord is essential.

Question : *How can man know the true nature of the Lord ?*

Answer : Through devotion (Bhakti).

Question : *What then will be man's state ?*

Answer : He becomes one with the Lord, attains union with Brahman.

Question : *From this, what do we learn to be the way to liberation ?*

Answer : By true knowledge, liberation is attained and true knowledge is obtained by faithful devotion to the Lord. Therefore through devotion knowledge is obtained and through knowledge Moksha is realised. This is the rationale of spiritual realisation.

Those who take refuge in the Lord attain eternal liberation.

56. सर्वकर्माण्यपि सदा कुर्वाणो मद्व्यपाश्रयः।
मत्प्रसादादवाप्नोति शाश्वतं पदमव्ययम् ॥ ५६

Sarvakarmany api sada kurvano madvyapasrayah ।
matprasadad avapnoti sasvatam padam avyayam । 56

Meaning : सर्वकर्माणि *sarvakarmani :* all works, सदा *sada :* always, कुर्वाणः अपि *kurvanah api :* performing even, मद्व्यपाश्रयः *madvyapasrayah :* who takes refuge in the Lord only, मत्प्रसादात् *matprasadat :* by My grace, अव्ययं *avyayam :* imperishable, शाश्वतं पदम् *sasvatam padam :* eternal state of Moksha, आप्नोति *apnoti :* obtains.

Substance : Performing all actions continually, he who takes refuge in Me only obtains the indestructible state of *Moksha* by My grace.

Commentary : It is declared here that performing actions with devotion to the Lord, man secures His grace, by which deliverance is obtained. '*Sarvakarmanyapi*' means only those duties which come to man in the position in which he is placed, and not deeds which are prohibited by the *Sastras*. Though a man is engaged in the activities of the world with all the senses functioning continuously, if he remembers the Lord or if he surrenders the fruits of his works to the Lord, he obtains the grace of Iswara and liberation comes to him easily. From this we understand that action performed with true devotion leads man to the state of supreme Bliss. He who takes refuge in the Lord is not bound by any action or by all the actions done continually throughout his life. On the other hand he breaks the bonds of *Karma*, for, the binding power of *Karma* is destroyed by true devotion to the Lord. There is no agency or selfish desire behind such work. Such is the state of the true devotee whose mind is centred in the Lord and who feels that it is the power of the Lord which is functioning through him. When that attitude of mind is firmly established, man feels not the weight of work, nor the changes of fortune, nor the anxieties of the future.

Just as the court-dancer carrying on her head a brimful pitcher of water, though talking, singing and dancing, keeps her mind on the pitcher to keep it secure, so also the devotee, while engaged in a thousand activities, keeps his mind fixed on the Lord and attains liberation.

The seekers on the path of *Karma-yoga* should remember this principle. Otherwise, every act binds man to the wheel of *Samsara* and results in endless strife and suffering. If a man is propelled by selfish desires and performs actions to reap their fruits, he is binding himself with the strongest chains of action and reaction, and birth after birth, he has to undergo all the ills and evils in earthly existence.

Matprasadat : No one can free himself from Maya's iron chains without Iswara's grace. Man who is subject to the power of *Maya* should seek the protection of Iswara who is the

Lord of *Maya*. He, by His grace, liberates man. Therefore everybody should try to win God's grace. How is God's grace to be obtained ?–By taking refuge in Him, and by sincere self-surrender. The Lord is pleased with such humble surrender. His grace flows into such a soul and makes him free and happy. The Lord is not partial to any one. The devotee approaches the Lord by his self-surrender. The Lord reveals Himself to such a man. Thereby, man becomes Divine. So every seeker should engage himself in good works and perform them with devotion and self-surrender.

The state of *Moksha* is described as indestructible and eternal. All else however great and mighty it may be, is subject to time, place and causation. Only *Moksha* is beyond all change, beyond all conditions. It is existence, knowledge, bliss absolute.

Question : *What is the nature of Moksha ?*

Answer : Eternal and imperishable.

Question : *How is it attained ?*

Answer : By the grace of Iswara.

Question : *How is Iswara's grace obtained ?*

Answer : By continuous memory of the Lord and surrendering the fruits of all actions to Him, man obtains His Grace.

Question : *Should man give up action to attain Moksha ?*

Answer : No. Though a man is engaged in actions arising from his position in the world, if he works with devotion and self-surrender to the Lord, he attains Moksha. Thus true devotion and detached performance of all works are necessary for liberation.

Question : *How should man act in the world ?*

Answer : He should perform good actions enjoined by the Sastras, and give away the rewards to the Lord. He should remember the Lord while performing the actions.

Question : *By such devotion and selfless action, what does man acquire ?*

Answer : He acquires God's grace and through His Grace, Liberation.

Having surrendered all works mentally to the Lord, the seeker should fix his mind in the Lord.

57\. चेतसा सर्वकर्माणि मयि संन्यस्य मत्परः ।
बुद्धियोगमुपाश्रित्य मच्चित्तः सततं भव ॥ ५७

Chetasa sarvakarmani mayi sannyasya matparah ।
buddhiyogam upasritya macchittah satatam bhava ॥ 57

Meaning : सर्वकर्माणि *sarvakarmani :* all actions (with their fruits), चेतसा *chetasa :* mentally, (with discrimiuation), मयि *mayi :* in me, संन्यस्य *sannyasya :* resigning, मत्परः *matparah :* having me as the highest goal, बुद्धियोगम् *buddhiyogam :* the yoga of discrimination (or single-minded concentration), उपाश्रित्य *upasritya :* resorting to, सततं *satatam :* always, मच्चित्तः *macchittah :* with mind fixed on Me, भव *bhava :* be.

Substance : Mentally surrendering all actions to Me, having Me as the highest goal, resorting to *Buddhiyoga*, fix your mind ever on Me.

Commentary : *Chetasa :* The body may be engaged in various activities, but the mind should be clear enough to know that all those actions are resigned to the Lord. So the Lord here teaches resignation of the fruits of actions and not actions themselves. It is useless to give up the actions of the body while the mind wanders always in all directions, thinking of so many worldly things. On the other hand, while the body carries on its prescribed duties, to be thinking of the Lord and

giving up the fruits of action to Him, leads to *Moksha*. Therefore the word '*chetasa*' is used here. Knowing that it is the Lord's power that is running through him and that his actions have no relevance to him except as the work of the Lord, is the secret of *Karmayoga*.

Buddhiyogam : In the Tenth Discourse, the Lord has already declared that He would bestow '*buddhiyoga*' on his faithful devotee, (*dadami buddhiyogam*). Concentration of mind and enquiry into the Self are gifts of God to the devotee. This becomes clear when man attempts to clear the mystery of Self-knowledge. The enquiring mind is disturbed by a hundred doubts and fears, longings, desires and attachments. The path of enquiry is cleared up by God's grace. The wavering mind is brought to a state of steadiness. One-pointed attention on the Divine becomes possible. The enquirer then finds that the idea of 'I' and 'mine' are only fictitious creations of the mind, and what exists althrough is *Atma* (God). The word '*satatam*' shows that the memory of the supreme Reality should be constantly present in the consciousness, for otherwise, *Maya* would plumge him into *Tamas* and drag him down to the plane of sense-enjoyments. So, the sincere seeker should keep the thoughts of God fresh and clear always.

Matparah : Knowing that the whole of the objective world is insentient and ephemeral, the wise man should consider *Paramatma* as the highest goal.

Question : *What should the jiva do to attain Paramatma ?*

Answer : 1) Mentally, he should surrender all actions to God,

2) He should consider God as the highest goal,

3) He should resort to Buddhi-yoga and carry on enquiry into the Self,

4) He should keep his mind fixed constantly on God.

Question : *What is the Lord's teaching ? Is it the renunciation of action or the renunciation of the fruits of action ?*

Answer : It is not the renunciation of action but the fruits of action that is emphasised here. Though the body is engaged in various activities, the devotee is called up to surrender both the actions and their fruits to God.

Question : *What should man consider the highest goal and why ?*

Answer : Paramatma, as He is the only permanent reality.

Question : *On what should the mind be fixed constantly ?*

Answer : On Paramatma.

All difficulties and sorrows are transcended by the man whose mind is fixed on God.

58. मच्चित्तः सर्वदुर्गाणि मत्प्रसादात्तरिष्यसि ।
अथ चेत्त्वमहङ्कारान्न श्रोष्यसि विनङ्क्ष्यसि ॥ ५८

Macchittah sarvadurgani matprasadat tarisyasi ।
atha chet tvam ahamkaran na sroshyasi vinankshyasi ॥ 58

Meaning : मच्चित्तः *macchitah* : fixing the mind on Me, मत्प्रसादात् *matprasadat* : by My Grace, सर्वदुर्गाणि *sarvadurgani* : all obstacles, born of Samsara (almost impossible for man to cross over), तरिष्यसि *tarishyasi* : (you) will transcend, अथ *atha* : now, त्वम् *tvam* : you, अहङ्कारात् *ahamkarat*, from egotism, न श्रोष्यसि चेत् *na sroshyasi chet* : (if you will) not hear (My instructions), विनङ्क्ष्यसि *vinankshyasi* : (you will) perish.

Substance : Fixing your mind on Me, by My grace, you will overcome all obstacles; now if, from egotism, you do not take My instruction, you will perish.

Commentary : *Durgani* : Durgam means obstacle in the way of spiritual realisation. *Maya* has created and is creating innumerable hurdles and obstacles, difficulties and dangers, by which man is frustrated in his aspiration to

attain the ultimate goal of life. This is everybody's experience in life. And this *Maya* cannot be crossed by any amount of human effort. The Lord of *Maya* is alone capable of removing *Maya*. Thus surrendering to the Lord is the only way to dispel the clouds, the illusions and delusions of the mind. There is no other way.

Matprasadat : The Lord's grace is free for all. But those only who worship Him heart and soul feel the effect of His grace. Though the wind is blowing every where, only those sailors advance on the way who keep the sails of their boats unfurled. Those who seek shelter under a tree alone feel the cool-shade. Therefore surrender to the Lord is the only way for man to transcend all sorrows and difficulties.

The choice is left to man. If he surrenders, he will be happy and overcome all difficulties. If he does not, eternal bondage will be his lot, however much he may struggle in the ocean of *Samsara*.

Question : *How can man transcend the difficulties of Samsara ?*

Answer : If he surrenders to the Lord with his mind fixed on Him, all the obstacles with vanish.

Question : *What is the fate of those who refuse the Lord's command ?*

Answer : They will perish.

Question : *What prevents man from surrendering to the Lord ?*

Answer : The pride of egotism stands in the way of self-surrender.

The Lord tells Arjuna that even if he refuses to fight on account of his egoism, nature will compel him to fight whether he wants it or not.

59. यदहङ्कारमाश्रित्य न योत्स्य इति मन्यसे ।
मिथ्यैष व्यवसायस्ते प्रकृतिस्त्वां नियोक्ष्यति ॥ ५९

Yady ahamkaram ashritya na yotsya iti manyase ।
mithyai'sha vyavasayas te prakritis tvam niyokshyati ॥ 59

Meaning : यदि *yadi* : if, अहङ्कारं *ahamkaram* : egoism, आश्रित्य *asritya* : having taken refuge in, न योत्स्य इति *na yotsya iti* : (I) will not fight, thus, मन्यसे *manyase* : (thou) thinkest, एषः ते व्यवसायः *eshah te vyavasayah* : this your resolve, मिथ्या *mithya* : (is) futile, प्रकृतिः *prakritih* : (thy Kshatriya) nature, त्वाम् *twam* : you नियोक्ष्यति *niyokshyati* : will compel.

Substance : If prompted by egoism you think 'I will not fight', vain is this your resolve, for, nature will compel you.

Commentary : In his former teaching, the Lord advised Arjuna to give up the idea of doership and fight the righteous war. Now the Lord points out that even if Arjuna resolves to give up action, he cannot do so, for reason that his own nature will compel him to fight against his own resolve not to do so. The great secret behind all action is the sense of non-doership (i. e.) the absence of agency, in the doer. Man must act some way or other by the force of his nature and habit. How then can he be free from the binding effects of his action ? The answer is this–By giving up the sense of doership, and renouncing the fruits of action he can be free. This is the essential secret behind all action. One who has attained this feeling of detachment is not bound by any thing that he does.

The Lord says that even if a man does not wish to do a thing, he will definitely do it, by the compelling force of past habits of his own nature.

60. स्वभावजेन कौन्तेय निबद्धः स्वेन कर्मणा ।
कर्तुं नेच्छसि यन्मोहात्करिष्यस्यवशोऽपि तत् ॥ ६०

Svabhavajena kaunteya nibaddhah svena karma.
kartum ne'cchasi yan mohat karishyasy avaso'pi tat । 60

Meaning : कौन्तेय *kaunteya* : O Arjuna ! स्वभावजेन *svabhavajena* : born of his nature (past habits of thought and action etc.) past Samskaras, स्वेन *svena* : his own, कर्मणा *karmana* : by action (former work), निबद्धः *nibaddhah* : bound firmly,

मोहात् *mohat* : without discrimination, यत् *yat* : that (fighting his battle), कर्तुं *kartum* : to do, न इच्छसि *na icchasi* : (you) do not wish, तत् अपि *tat api* : even that, अवशः *avasah* : helplessly, करिष्यसि *karishyasi* : you will do.

Substance : O Arjuna! bound by your own *Karma*, born of your own nature, that which in a deluded state you do not wish to do, even that you will do helplessly.

Commentary : *Nibaddhah* : Man is bound by his own thoughts and works (*Karma*). The Lord knew that Arjuna's nature as a *Kshatriya* is to fight. That is why he tells Arjuna that even if he does not wish to fight, he will still engage himself in the battle, prompted to it by his own nature. This is a truth that man thinks and acts according to his nature. If that is so, if man cannot but follow nature, how can there be any prospect of liberation? He was bound in the past and the same will bind him in the present and the future. Is there no way out? There is. The force of nature and human effort are both active forces in one's life. However much he feels that he is bound by nature, there is the opposite current of thought pointing the way to liberation. The struggle between the two goes on endlessly in the human heart. The Divine *Samskaras* slowly unfold themselves and as they become stronger, all the weaknesses of man are overcome in due course. There is no other way. Therefore every man, however degraded he may be at present, must take an upward curve one time or other. The sooner it is done the better it is for man. But there is no cause for despair in this account. "Perseverance will finally conquer" says Vivekananda.

Question : *By what is man bound* ?

Answer : By his own habits of thought and action acquired in previous births.

Question : *How does he liberate himself* ?

Answer : He will attain liberation by cultivating assiduously all good qualities by human effort in the present birth.

The Lord by the power of his Divine Maya manipulates all beings like so many dolls.

61. ईश्वरः सर्वभूतानां हृद्देशेऽर्जुन तिष्ठति ।
भ्रामयन्सर्वभूतानि यन्त्रारूढानि मायया ॥ ६१

Isvarah sarvabhutanam hriddese'rjuna tisthati ।
bhramayan sarvabhutani yantrarudhani mayaya ॥ 61

Meaning : अर्जुन *Arjuna* : O Arjuna! ईश्वरः *iswarah* : the Lord who controls all by his invisible presence in all, मायया *mayaya* : by Maya, (illusion), सर्वभूतानि *sarvabhutani* : all beings, यन्त्रारूढानि *yantrarudhani* (*iva*) : like puppets mounted on a machine, भ्रामयन् *bhramayan* : are caused to revolve, सर्वभूतानां *sarvabhutanam* : of all beings, हृद्देशे *hriddese* : in the heart, तिष्ठति *tisthati* : exists.

Substance : O Arjuna! the Lord dwells in the hearts of all beings, causing all beings revolve like puppets by His illusive power (*Maya*).

Commentary : Where does the Lord dwell? How does His powers work? These questions are answered here. It is the most foolish delusion of man to think that the Lord is far away, some-where in the remote sky and at some such place where man cannot reach. This way of thinking has become a habit of mind for all mankind, except for a very few wise men, who know the secret. The Lord is not away from us. He is with us, in us, right in our own heart. That is the Lord's declaration. He dwells in the heart of all beings, and so one should be very careful in his thoughts and deeds. He sees all. He is the all-pervasive *Atmam*. He is the dispenser of rewards and punishments for each and every being, according to his *Punya* and *Papa Karma*. Therefore man should feel the presence of the Lord within and without and try his best to avoid evil and cling to the good only. People must follow the path of truth and righteousness, for, the Lord sees all by His invisible presence everywhere. The Lord's declaration should inspire hope to the devotee,

Where else has he to go to find the Lord who is present in his own heart?

The Lord is present everywhere, and most so in the heart of man. He should be worshipped as the nearest of the near and the dearest of the dear. Without any distinction whatsoever, he is in all beings. The vehicle of manifestation may be a small thing like an ant, or a big thing like an elephant. This does not make any difference at all for the Lord. He is equally present in all, in the sinner as well as in the saint. His presence is felt more where the heart is pure. The difference is only in the degree of manifestation. If the mirror is clear, the sun's reflection is bright; if the mirror is unclear, the reflection is dim. This makes no difference at all to the Sun.

Yantrarudhani : The illusive power of *Maya* works on all beings. They are moved by *Maya* in accordance with their own nature. They are like puppets mounted on a machine. As the wheel moves, all the beings move helplessly. They cannot get out of the wheel. The *Jivas* are bound to the wheel of *Samsara*, the cycle of birth and death, and rotate helplessly by the inscrutable power of *Maya*. In the next verse the Lord points out the way to get out of the wheel. The way is to surrender to the Lord of *Maya*, who by His grace releases the *Jiva* from the endless cycle of *Samsara*.

Mayaya : *Maya* is the instrument of the Lord. The entire work of nature is carried on by *Maya*. The Lord, as the *Atma*, is only the witness of the activities of *Maya*.

Question : *Where does Iswara dwell?*

Answer : In the heart of all beings.

Question : *How does he work?*

Answer : He revolves all beings in the great wheel of *Samsara*.

Question : *How?*

Answer : Like puppets mounted on a wheel.

Question : *What is the secret power of the Lord?*

Answer : Maya—the illusive power of the Lord.

It is said that all beings are held by the mighty wheel of Samsara. In this verse the means for attaining peace and liberation are explained.

62. तमेव शरणं गच्छ सर्वभावेन भारत ।
तत्प्रसादात्परां शान्तिं स्थानं प्राप्स्यसि शाश्वतम् ॥ ६२

Tam eva saranam gaccha sarva bhavena bharata ।
tatprasadat param santim sthanam prapsyasi sasvatam 62

Meaning : भारत *bharata* : O Arjuna! सर्वभावेन *sarvabhavena* : with all your being, तमेव *tameva* : Him alone, शरणं गच्छ *saranam gaccha* : take refuge in, तत् प्रसादात् *tat prasadat* : by His Grace, परां शान्तिं *param santim* : supreme peace, शाश्वतम् *sasvatam* : eternal, स्थानं *sthanam* : position (i. e.) liberation, प्राप्स्यसि *prapsyasi* : you will obtain.

Substance : O Arjuna! with all your being, take refuge in the Lord; by His grace, you will obtain supreme peace and the eternal abode (i. e.) liberation.

Commentary : It is said in the previous verse that man is bound to the wheel of *Samsara* by the power of *Maya*. What is the way for liberation? How can he attain supreme peace? The answer is given in this verse. To surrender with all his being, whole-heartedly to the Lord who dwells in all beings is the only way to attain freedom from the shackles of *Samsara*. If anybody wants to stop a machine he must seek the help of the machanic. The Lord is the mechanic who holds and runs the tremendous machine of *Samsara*. Therefore *Jiva* has to take refuge in the Lord if he wants liberation. Without whole-hearted surrender to the Lord, the power of *Maya* will not give way. Only the power of the Lord is capable of terminating the power of *Maya*. To none else will *Maya* give way. Therefore the Lord advises Arjuna to surrender to Him with all his being. This exhortation is for all beings. It is the simplest and easiest path for every one to follow. All physical powers are subject to the power of *Maya* and *Maya* is subject to the power of the

Lord. Knowing this, man has to give up pride and egoism and take refuge in the Lord with humility and devotion. The same idea is expressed many times in many places in the Gita. This is one of the central ideas of the Scripture. That the idea of surrender is emphasised in the last verses of the Scripture is sufficient proof that it is the major current of thought throughout. Arjuna surrendered to the Lord before the message of Gita is offered to him. The idea is once again brought into focal point at the end.

Sarvabhavena : With all his being (i. e.) body, mind and speech. It means that the surrender should be complete and unconditional. The whole responsibility is given over to the Lord. The difficulty for the common man is that his surrender generally is conditioned by a secret and silent demand. It is not unreserved. Man's faith is generally half-hearted. He doubts the mercy of the Lord. He partly wishes to do things by himself, although his life's experience show that he has not obtained any great advantage by his own effort. After many many births, man realises that the will of the Lord is supreme, and it is He who is a trust-worthy friend and supporter for him in this life, here and now. The sooner man discovers it the better it is for him, for he will then obtain the peace which has been eluding him.

Tat prasadat : By the grace of the Lord. Divine Grace! He who has obtained it, unto him everything is possible. All crookedness shall be straightened for him by the Lord's grace. He becomes a *Dharmatma* quickly, says the Lord. How can one obtain God's Grace? By surrender, with a pure and clear heart, without any reservations, personal ambitions and plans for getting this or that material benefit. What does not man obtain by such surrender? Peace, bliss and liberation from the wheel of *Samsara*. All the highest aspirations of man all fulfilled by the Lord's grace.

Param santim : Supreme Peace. The state of *Moksha* is the highest peace and bliss. It is peace that passeth understanding. It does not depend upon external circumstances. Kings cannot have it. Even emperors cannot hold that peace.

It is not in any of the different worlds. This peace is in the Atmam, who is the real Seer behind all this phenomenal world. The phenomenal world is only an appearance, and attachment to the false, inert, and sorrowful would destroy all happiness within. He who disassociates himslef from this load of matter, and takes shelter within the Lord finds the treasure of true happiness and peace.

Sasvatam : The bliss of *Moksha* is eternal. It is changeless and deathless. All other forms of enjoyment in the material world are short-lived, temporary and subject to change. Do we not see from practical experience that pleasure and pain alternately, come down day after day, hour after hour? Of what use is it to cling to them foolishly? 'Give it up' is the Lord's command. By giving up the temporary man attains the eternal state of liberation. It is given only to man to attain this the highest state. The human birth is the greatest asset, for, in this manifestation only it is possible for man to attain *Moksha*. It is difficult for all other manifestations, higher and lower to attain liberation. So, whoever seeks his welfare should surrender to the Lord, obtain His grace, and thereby come up to the highest state of peace and bliss.

Question : *What is the highest Divine State?*

Answer : It is full of peace and eternal bliss.

Question : *How can man obtain it?*

Answer : By the Grace of the Lord.

Question : *How can man obtains God's grace?*

Answer : By complete surrender to the Supreme Deity.

Question : *What is the way to peace and the highest state?*

Answer : By devotion, man obtains the grace of the Lord, and by such grace he obtains the reward of eternal peace and liberation.

Having taught all the secrets of true wisdom, the Lord leaves the final decision to Arjuna himself to act according to his own wish.

63. इति ते ज्ञानमाख्यातं गुह्याद्गुह्यतरं मया ।
विमृश्यैतदशेषेण यथेच्छसि तथा कुरु ॥ ६३

Iti te jnanam akhyatam guhyad guhyataram maya ।
vimrisyai'tad aseshena yathe'cchasi tatha kuru । 63

Meaning : इति *iti :* thus, गुह्यात् गुह्यतरं *guhyataram :* the most secret of all, ज्ञानं *jnanam :* knowledge-The Gita-Sastra containing all the principles of Karma, Bhakti, Dhyana, Jnana, dispassion and renunciation, मया *maya :* by me, ते *te :* to you, आख्यातम् *akhyaitam :* is declared, एतत् *etat :* this, अशेषेण *aseshena :* completely, विमृश्य *vimrisya :* having reflected over it, यथेच्छसि *yadhecchasi :* as you wish, तथा *tatha :* so, कुरु *kuru :* act.

Substance : Thus has been declared by Me to you this secrect of all knowledge (the Gita-Sastra); having reflected over it fully, act according to your wish.

Commentary : The Lord describes the *Gita-Sastra* as the most secret of all knowledge. The teachings of this wisdom should be communicated only to such disciples who are qualified to receive it. Arjuna was qualified to receive it by virtue of his great devotion to Krishna, and the virtuous qualities (Daivisampat) that he possessed. Lord Krishna has thereby done a great service to mankind. Even for learning any worldly skill or art, a great deal of preperation is necessary for the student. When that is so, what amount of internal and external preparation is necessary for receiving this highest wisdom, one can easily understand. So the Lord declares that he has taught the most secret wisdom to Arjuna, just because he is fit to receive it, and finds it most necessary in the circumstances in which he is placed.

Vimrisyaita daseshena : Fully reflecting over it. It is the practice of all great teachers to give all that the disciple wants by way of teaching and instruction, and finally leave it to the disciple to decide what he should do, and how he should act.

Only the narrow-minded teacher insists on the disciple to accept what he says without doubt or question. On the other hand, the great teachers give complete freedom of thought and reflection to the disciples. Man has to make a free choice of his course of action according to his own nature. The disciple should know and feel the truth of what was taught to him. Then only he derives the full benefit of the master's teaching. We see in this context how broad-minded the Lord was when he left the freedom of choice to Arjuna himself. Arjuna was one of the greatest devotees of Krishna. Krishna's word was law unto him. If Lord Krishna wanted Arjuna to fight in the form of a command, Arjuna would have immediately acted up without any hesitation. But the Lord takes a different view. After giving the full message of wisdom, the Lord asks Arjuna to reflect over it, to think well and deeply, and come to a voluntary decision. Such a decision would ultimately benefit him much more than a mere verbal command from the teacher. The final decision is left entirely to the individual.

Yadhecchasi tadha kuru : Act as you wish. The Lord simply explained the position to Arjuna. That is all. He has nothing more to say. The disciple is free to take it or leave it. Here is a great example of *Nishkama-karma.* Having taught the *Gita Sastra*, the Lord leaves it without a thought of the fruit of his action. Although the main objective of the Lord is to make Arjuna fight the battle, He remains unconcerned about the result of his message. The Lord seems to say "you may fight or you may not. That is your decision, not mine. I have taught you the essence of all the *Vedas*, and it is your duty in the present situation, to take it or leave it. I am unconcerned". Such is the way how great teachers act in respect of their disciples Their message is delivered in a simple and powerful way. They pass on, leaving it to the people to think about it, draw their own conclusions and come to their own decision. This is an example of *Nishkama-karma* with which the scripture comes to a close.

Jnanam akhyatam : Although in the *Gita Sastra*, the Lord has dealt with *Karma, Bhakti, Dhyana* etc., they are all implied in the simple word wisdom (*Jnana*). The various paths culmi-

nate in *Jnana*. They are all intended to purify the mind gradually, and the mind so purified by the practice of *Karma* and *Bhakti* etc., acquires *Jnana* by which man attains the highest goal of *Moksha*. *Karma* and *Bhakti* are stepping stones to *Jnana*. *Jnana* is the peak point of realisation.

Question : *How is the Gita Sastra described ?*

Answer : As the most secret of all secrets.

Question : *Having delivered the message of wisdom, what should be the attitude of the teacher ?*

Answer : He should leave it to the disciple to reflect over it deeply, and act according to his own wish.

The culmination of all Yogas and all human endeavours is enunciated in the following three verses—

64. सर्वगुह्यतमं भूयः शृणु मे परमं वचः ।
इष्टोऽसि मे दृढमिति ततो वक्ष्यामि ते हितम् ॥ ६४

Sarvaguhyatamam bhuyah srinu me paramam vachah ।
isto 'si me dridham iti tato vakshyami te hitam ॥ 64

Meaning : सर्वगुह्यतमं *sarvaguhyatamam* : the most secret of all, परमम् *paramam* : supreme, मे *me* : my, वचः *vachah* : word, भूयः *bhuyah* : again, शृणु *srinu* : hear, मे *me* : of me, दृढम् *dhridham* : dearly, इष्टः असि *ishtah asi* : beloved you are, इति ततः *iti tatah* : thus therefore, ते *te* : your, हितम् *hitam* : what is good, वक्ष्यामि *vakshyami* : I will speak.

Substance : (O Arjuna!) Listen again to my supreme word, the profoundest of all. You are dear to me and faithful. Therefore I shall tell you what is for your good.

Commentary : The Lord uses superlative expression to bring out the great importance and significance of the profound secret which he now reveals to Arjuna.

Bhuyah : (again) – Out of compassion for the disciple, the Lord repeats what He has already said. Such repetition is no fault. The great Master is most anxious that his disciple should understand the essence of his teaching.

Paramam vachah : (Supreme word). The Lord says that he is speaking out the highest truth, and explaining the most profound secret. One can understand what degree of faith the disciple should have and with what concentrated attention he should hear the words of the Lord.

Ishtosi : (You are dear to me). The aim of the disciple first of all should be to win the love of the Master. Knowledge would follow automatically by the grace of the Master. With love the Master teaches, and with faith the disciple receives knowledge. Therefore the first thing that a disciple should do is to serve the master in every possible way and win his affection and love. The same idea has already been stated in the thirty fourth verse of Chapter Three. By respectaful obedience, by prostration, by personal service, and by humly questioning, the disciple receives the highest knowledge from the Master who offers it to his beloved disciple with love and affection. Spiritual knowledge cannot be purchased or bought by wealth or wordly position or greatness. It is the Master's gift of love to his disciple.

Arjuna is a true devotee. So he is dear to the Lord. When the mind becomes ripe with true devotion, the Master comes and confers knowledge on his disciple. God leads the disciple to the Master or the Master himself comes in search of the disciple. No true seeker need be disheartened that he is not able to find the Master. The Master would come to him at the appointed time and initiate him into the secrets of spiritual knowledge. Therefore the real seeker should fill his mind with devotion, train himself in the methods of self-control and live a pure life. When such preparation is complete, the Master simply opens the heart of the disciple and the highest Truth so far concealed in him is revealed to him in a flash.

The *Sastras* are very clear on this point. They have repeatedly declared that without God's grace and the grace of the Teacher, no one can attain spiritual knowledge.

Question : *What is the nature of the Lord's teaching to Arjuna* ?

Answer : It is the highest and the most profound secret.

Question : *Why does the Lord offer it to Arjuna* ?

Answer : Because Arjuna was a true devotee.

In two verses the Lord gives the very essence of his teaching.

65. मन्मना भव मद्भक्तो मद्याजी मां नमस्कुरु ।
मामेवैष्यसि सत्यं ते प्रतिजाने प्रियोऽसि मे ॥ ६५

Manmana bhava madbhakto madyaji mam namaskuru ।
mam evai'shyasi satyam te pratijane priyo'si me । 65

Meaning : मन्मनाः *manmanah* : with mind fixed on me, मद्भक्तः *madbhaktah* : devoted to me, मद्याजी *madyaji* : sacrifice to me, भव *bhava* : be, माम् *mam* : me, नमस्कुरु *namaskuru* : bow down, माम् एव *mam eva* : to me only, एष्यसि *eshyasi* : you shall come, मे *me* : to me, प्रियः असि *priyah asi* : dear you are, ते *te* : to you, प्रतिजाने *pratijane* : I promise, सत्यं *satyam* : truth.

Substance : Fix your mind on me; be devoted to me; sacrifice to me; prostrate before me; so shall you come to me only. This is My pledge to you, for you are dear to me.

Commentary : This verse and the next one contain the essence of the *Gita* teaching. The Lord has already declared that he is now revealing the most profound secret out of love for his disciple.

In this verse and the next, the first part states the path of spiritual progress, and the last part declares the goal of spiritual life. Four types of spiritual discipline are pointed out here–(1) Fixing the mind on God, (2) Devotion to God, (3) Performing sacrifice unto God (4) Humble prostration to God. Such discipline leads to the highest realisation, namely, union with God.

Therefore those who seek knowledge should reject all the temptations of the flesh. They should fix their mind on God and love God with the same zeal and attraction as they feel for the objects of the senses. They should bow to God in utter humility. They should meditate on God with a full heart. The ignorant unfortunately run after sensual pleasures and distract their minds with a hundred petty desires and longings. They miss the way and are lost in darkness. They have strayed away from the path of true happiness. They cannot realise the bliss of union with God.

Satyam te pratijane : The Lord clears the last trace of doubt from the mind of Arjuna by saying–"This is the truth; I pledge my word." Rarely do we come across such open declarations from the Lord in the course of his teaching. One's faith in the Lord's teaching is doubled and redoubled, and he accepts the final words of the Lord with deep and unswerving faith, and attain liberation.

Manmanah bhava : All the four paths of spiritual progress are included in this verse (1) Action (*Karma*), (2) Devotion (*Bhakti*), (3) Meditation (*Dhyana*) (4) Knowledge (*Jnana*).

Question : *What are the means of liberation* ?

Answer : 1) Fixing the mind on God,
2) Devotion to God,
3) Performing sacrifices unto God,
4) Humble prostration before God.

Question : *On whom does the Lord bestow his grace* ?

Answer : On those who win his love by following the spiritual discipline with truth and sincerity.

Question : *What is the result of such devotion to God* ?

Answer : They attain Liberation. This is the pledge of the Lord.

The Lord declares finally the very essence of the Gita message.

66. सर्वधर्मान्परित्यज्य मामेकं शरणं व्रज ।
अहं त्वा सर्वपापेभ्यो मोक्षयिष्यामि मा शुचः ॥ ६६

Sarvadharman parityajya mam ekam saranam vraja ।
aham tva sarvapapebhyo mokshayisyami ma suchah ॥ 66

Meaning : सर्वधर्मान् *Sarvadharman:* all duties, परित्यज्य *parityajya :* having abandoned, माम् *mam :* to me, एकं *ekam :* alone, शरणं व्रज *saranam vraja :* refuge take, अहम् *aham :* I, त्वा *tva :* you, सर्वपापेभ्यः *sarvapapebhyah :* from all sins, मोक्षयिष्यामि *mokshayishyami :* will liberate, मा शुचः *ma suchah :* do not grieve.

Substance : Having abandoned all duties (*Dharmas*) take refuge in Me alone. I will liberate you from all sins. Do not grieve.

Commentary : This is the last verse of the Gita-message. The first part represents '*kilakam*' in the *Mantra Sastra.* The essence of the Gita-message is summed up in this verse. The *Vaishnavas* repeat it as a *Mantra.*

Sarvadharman Parityajya : (having abandoned all duties). Surrender to the Lord is the direct path for attaining ultimate liberation. Performing the duties prescribed by the *Sastras* is no doubt good as it produces '*Punya*' which takes man to higher worlds. But surrender to the Lord confers *Moksha*–Liberation. The fruit of all duties and religious observances is implied in surrender. Therefore the Lord advises his disciple to abandon all other duties and attain the highest goal by complete Self-surrender.

Mam Ekam : (Me alone). The fruit of all duties form a part of the infinite bliss of Liberation, as ten forms a part of a hundred. When the stem is watered, all the branches upto the last twig receive nourishment. So the Lord here enjoins complete Self-surrender as the simplest and also the highest

method for final Liberation. God is the highest good. By knowing Him (*Atma*) all else is known, and by attaining Him all the rewards of spiritual life are attained. The fruit of God-realisation is infinite. All finite works and actions are implied in it.

Mokshayishyami : (I will liberate you from all sins). What is the effect of Self-surrender ? The *Dharma Sastras* prescribe certain types of penance for the purification of some forms of sin, committed by man in the course of his life. Self-surrender liberates man completely from all sins, innumerable though they may be. In fact the common man is not aware how many kinds of sins he is committing every day without his knowledge. So he is bound by his own sins, and wanders through the various worlds, in restless agitation. Such is the fate of the '*Jiva*' who clings to worldly life and yet hopes for peace which eludes him throughout his life. This restlessness troubles him continuously till he discovers the only way of liberation from all sins and from all forms of bondage. The Lord here reveals the highest secret. "Surrender to Me; I will liberate you from all sins", declares the Lord.

Self-surrender should not be a partial affair. It must be complete, without any pre-condition or the least reservation. The river when it joins the ocean does not keep back any part of its separate identity. The union is complete. Thus Self-surrender leads to complete union with the Lord or *Atma*. The *Jivatma* becomes *Paramatma*, and that is the culmination of all spiritual knowledge.

What is the nature of this Self-surrender ? It is to withdraw oneself from every kind of worldly attachment. It is to give up all temptation to enjoy the pleasures of this world or the next. It is to abandon all desires. It is to crush the last trace of the ego as a separate entity. Such is the nature of Self-surrender. This cannot be done in a single day. The principle should be properly understood, and continuously practised in every day life.

It is the divine law that by doing good, man attains joy, and by doing evil he suffers sorrow. Good and evil are mixed up in various proportions in the life of each individual. So joys and sorrows overtake men like the waves of the ocean. This is what we call *Samsara*. The man who clings to the senses must experience pleasure and pain alternately. Pleasure and pain are inextricably mixed up as the two vital ingredients of human life. So the wise man after experiencing the mixed fruits of his actions through many many births, finally gives up the futile and foolish game and turns his mind to God. There he finds the peace which surpasses understanding. This is Liberation.

The devotee, the *Bhakta*, surrenders to the Lord, and the *Jnani*, the man who follows the path of discrimination, surrenders to *Atma*. It may appear as though there is a subtle distinction between the two, the *Bhakta* and the *Jnani*, the path of devotion and the path of knowledge through discrimination. The *Gita* has already made it clear that the distinction is only a verbal difference, and in essence there is no distinction at all. All paths, *Jnana*, *Bhakti*, and *Karma*, lead to the same goal-Liberation. The basic truth implied in all these paths is renunciation, *Tyaga*, of the little limited personal ego. The *Sastras* declare that by *Tyaga* alone man attains immortality.

The reader has to understand the statement '*Sarva Dharman parityajya*' very carefully. It does not mean that he can remain idle without doing anything at all. If that is so, every idler can claim to be a *Brahmajnani*, a liberated soul. That is not the meaning. The statement means that the individual should surrender the fruits of his *Karma* and *Dharma* in the Lord, and by such surrender, he attains *Moksha*. The lesser duties have to be abandoned by taking to the higher and the highest duty—namely self-surrender.

Ma suchah : (Do not grieve) : This is the Lord's pledge to all his faithful disciples. The Gita actually starts with the words of the Lord 'asochyan anvasochastvam' and ends here with the glorious promise 'ma suchah'. Therefore it is perfectly

clear that the purpose of the entire Gita message is to liberate man from the deadly grip of sorrow. Life is a kind of pilgrimage, not from one joy to another, but from one sorrow to another. The wise man knows it, and so he seeks for a joy that does not come to an end, a joy unmixed with sorrow, a joy that is permanent, a joy that fills full the yearning heart, and this he finds in Self-realisation. The ignorant man suffers and continues to suffer through several births, and at last he too comes to the conclusion that there must be a way out of this vicious circle. Then he hears the mighty call of the Gita—"Do not grieve, my fried, surrender to Me and I will liberate you from all sin and sorrow."

The Lord here prescribes the simplest form of discipline to the world as the highest means of ultimate Liberation. So the common man need not worry that he has not read this *Sastra* or that, that he has not followed this *Dharma* or that, that he has not performed this sacrifice or that, and so on. In whatever manner he lives, let him surrender to the Lord with truth and sincerity. He shall attain peace and he shall experience the bliss of Liberation.

Question : *How can man free himself from sin and bondage ?*

Answer : By complete surrender to the Lord.

Question : *What is the way to the highest Peace ?*

Answer : Surrender.

The Lord says that the Gita-Sastra should not be taught to those who are devoid of devotion.

67. इदं ते नातपस्काय नाभक्ताय कदाचन ।
न चाशुश्रूषवे वाच्यं न च मां योऽभ्यसूयति ॥ ६७

Idam te na'tapaskaya na'bhaktaya kadachana ।
na cha'susrushave vachyam na cha mam yo'bhyasuyati ॥ 67

Meaning : ते *te* : by you, इदं *idam* : this, कदाचन *kadachana* : ever, अतपस्काय *atapaskaya* : to one who is devodid of austerity;

न वाच्यं *na vachyam :* not to be spoken, अभक्ताय *abhaktaya :* to one who is devoid of devotion, न *na :* not, अशुश्रूषवे च *asushrushave cha :* and to one who does render no service or who does not deserve to listen, न *na :* not, यः *yah :* who, माम् *mam :* me, अभ्यसूयति *abhyasuyati :* cavils at, च *cha :* and, न *na :* not.

Substance : This is never to be spoken by you to one who is devoid of austerity, nor to one who is not devoted, nor to one who does not do service, nor to one who speaks ill of me.

Commentary : The Lord teaches his disciple that this great science of Liberation should not be revealed to those who are devoid of austerity and devotion.

This warning is necessary and no true seeker is excluded from the benefit of receiving the light of knowledge. It means that the seeker for Liberation should make himself fit to receive this knowledge by austerity, service and devotion.

It should not be taught to people who have neither self-control nor devotion to God. Such men are likely to disparage this great and secret knowledge and give false interpretation to the laws enunciated in the Gita. In practical life one comes across many flippant shallow people, engrossed in worldiness, who decry all spiritual knowledge as a foolish exercise in futility. Such men do great harm to society. They destroy faith and create doubts about the truth of this great science. Such men are not only unhelpful, but positively harmful to society.

The idea is stated negatively, but its positive meaning is clear. The receiver of this knowledge should possess certain qualities of character. He must have acquired self-discipline by following an austere way of life. He must possess devotion. He must have served elders and teachers, and he should never scorn the wise masters who deliver this wonderful message.

Above all, the disciple should be most eager to free himself from the ills of the flesh. This eagerness, this yearning to know the truth, to live by it, and experience the bliss of Liberation in his own life, is the first qualification for receiving the message of the Gita.

Question : *To whom should the Gita-Sastra be not taught ?*

Answer : To those who are devoid of austerity and devotion.

Question : *What does this prohibition imply ?*

Answer : It implies that those who have practised austerity and who have devotion to God are most qualified to receive the Gita message.

In this and the following verse, the Lord says that those who propogate the Gita-message are most dear to Him and they shall attain Him.

68. य इदं परमं गुह्यं मद्भक्तेष्वभिधास्यति ।
भक्तिं मयि परां कृत्वा मामेवैष्यत्यसंशयः ॥ ६८

Ya idam paramam guhyam madbhakteshvabhidhasyati ।
bhaktim mayi param kritva mam evai shyaty asamsayah ॥ 68

Meaning : यः *yah :* who, परमं गुह्यं *paramam guhyam :* Supreme secret, इमं *imam :* this, मद्भक्तेषु *madbhakteshu :* to my devotees, अभिधास्यति *abhidhasyati :* shall declare, मयि *mayi :* in me, परां *param :* Supreme, भक्तिं *bhaktim :* devotion, कृत्वा *kritva :* having done, असंशयः *asamsayah :* doubtless, माम् एव *mam eva :* to me alone, एष्यति *eshyati :* shall come.

Substance : He who with supreme devotion in me will teach this profound philosophy to my devotees, shall doubtless come to me alone.

Commentary : The Lord here declares that those who teach the Gita to his devotees would reach Him, attain *Moksha.* From this we understand the high value of true service to humanity.

Of course, there are many forms of service, but the highest service a wise man can do is to transmit his knowledge to others. Such a man attains the highest fruit of service, namely Liberation. The knowledge imbedded in the Gita contains the most profound secret of life. It provides the key to Liberation. It is no doubt a great thing to attain knowledge and liberate oneself, but it is an infinitely greater thing to offer the light of knowledge to others, who are in need, and thus help them to reach the highest goal of life.

Question : *What is the importance of the Gita ?*

Answer : It contains the most profound secret of Liberation.

Question : *To whom should it be taught ?*

Answer : To the devotees of the Lord.

Question : *What reward does he get ?*

Answer : He attains liberation (*Moksha*).

69. न च तस्मान्मनुष्येषु कश्चिन्मे प्रियकृत्तमः ।
भविता न च मे तस्मादन्यः प्रियतरो भुवि ॥ ६९

Na cha tasman manushyeshu kaschin me priya krittamah ।
bhavita na cha me tasmad anyah priyataro bhuvi ॥ 69

Meaning : मनुष्येषु *manushyeshu* : among men, तस्मात् *tasmat* : than he, मे *me* : of me, प्रियकृत्तमः *priyakrittamah* : one who does dearer service, कश्चित् *kaschit* : any, न च *na cha* : not and, तस्मात् *tasmat* : than he, मे *me* : of me, प्रियतरः *priyatarah* : dearer, अन्यः *anyah* : another, भुवि *bhuvi* : in the world, भविता न च *bhavita na cha* : shall be not and.

Substance : Nor is there any among men who renders dearer service to Me than he; nor shall there be another dearer to Me than he in the world.

Commentary : Those who teach the Gita are the most dear to the Lord. So the best way of obtaining the Grace of the Lord is to propagate his teaching. It is the best form of service to the Lord. Out of love and compassion for humanity, the Lord is eager to convey His message to the largest number of sincere seekers. He wants all his disciples not only to study the Gita, but communicate its message to others. People are all eager to obtain the grace of the Lord by doing various devotional deeds. Here the Lord says that he who propagates His teaching is the dearest of his devotees. The common man may not be able to do great deeds for the service of mankind. But it is within his power to study the Gita and communicate its precious message to others in every possible way. It is good to gather devotees of the Gita in towns and villages and do constructive spiritual work in the manner prescribed by the Lord.

Question : *Who is the man most dear to the Lord and who does the most dear service to Him ?*

Answer : The man who propogates the teaching of the Gita is most dear to the Lord, and it is he who does the most dear service to Him.

The study of the Gita is the sacrifice of Knowledge-Jnana Yagna.

70. अध्येष्यते च य इमं धर्म्यं संवादमावयोः ।
ज्ञानयज्ञेन तेनाहमिष्टः स्यामिति मे मतिः ॥ ७०

Adhyeshyate cha ya imam dharmyam samvadam avayoh
jnanayajnena tena'ham ishtah syam iti me matih ॥ 70

Meaning : यः च *yah cha* : and who, धर्म्यं *dharmyam* : sacred, आवयोः *avayoh* : of ours, इमं संवादम् *imam samvadam* : this dialogue, अध्येष्यते *adhyeshyate* : shall study, तेन *tena* : by him, ज्ञानयज्ञेन *jnanayajnena* : by the sacrifice of knowledge, अहम् *aham* : I, इष्टस्याम् *ishtasyam* : shall have been worshipped, इति मे *iti me* : thus my, मतिः *matih* : conviction.

Substance : And he who shall study this sacred dialogue of ours, by him I shall have been worshipped by *Jnana yagna*; this is my conviction.

Commentary : *Dharmyam* : The Gita is sacred because it does not swerve from *Dharma*. It is the very embodiment of *Dharma*. The opening words of the Gita- "*Dharmakshetre*"- are to be remembered here.

Jnanayajnena : The study of the Gita is a form of sacrifice—it is the Sacrifice of knowledge. So it is clear that the Gita teaches knowledge (*jnana*) as its main aim. The other paths of *Bhakti* and *Karma* are accessory aids which ultimately culminate in supreme knowledge. Worship of the Lord with flowers and fruits is no doubt good in its own way. But the devotee acquires greater merit by the study of the Gita and by understanding the wisdom enshrined in it. This is itself a holy sacrifice.

Me matih : (This is My conviction)-The Lord proclaims that the Gita is the message of the highest knowledge by which man attains Liberation.

Question : *What is the merit of the Gita* ?

Answer : It is Jnana-yagna.

One who hears the Gita also acquires great spiritual merit.

71. श्रद्धावाननसूयश्च शृणुयादपि यो नरः ।
सोऽपि मुक्तः शुभाँल्लोकान्प्राप्नुयात्पुण्यकर्मणाम् ॥ ७१

Sraddhavan anasuyas cha srinuyad api yo narah ।
so'pi muktah subhan lokan prapnuyat punya karmanam । 71

Meaning : यः *yah* : who, नरः *narah* : man, श्रद्धावान् *sraddhavan* : full of faith, अनसूयः च *anasuyah cha* : free from malice and, शृणुयादपि *srinuyadapi* : also may hear, सः अपि *sah api* : he even, मुक्तः *muktah* : liberated, पुण्यकर्मणां *punya-karmanam* : of those righteous deeds, शुभान् लोकान् *subhan lokan* : happy worlds, प्राप्नुयात् *prapnuyat* : shall attain.

Substance : And the man who hears this, full of faith and free from malice, even he shall attain the happy worlds of the righteous, freed from all evil.

Commentary : On many occasions, the Lord has warned the devotee against the evils of malice and hatred, and once again he emphasises the idea at the end of his teaching. Besides being free from these twin evils, one should possess single-minded devotion and faith (Sraddha). Without faith (Sraddha) no one can achieve anything great in any sphere of life. And particularly in the spiritual realm, no man can achieve any merit if his heart is impure. Malice is like a canker. It eats away the vital forces of man and renders him weak and disabled for any great pursuit.

There may be many illiterate persons who are eager to learn and know the *Sastras*, and who feel disappointed by their inability to read the sacred books. The Lord here declares that they need not at all be disappointed. They may hear the Gita-Sastra and acquire spiritual merit which offers them the reward of attaining the happy worlds of the righteous. Only the condition is that their hearts should be pure, free from malice and hatred. The centre of spiritual knowledge is the heart and not the brain. It is the illumination of the heart that liberates man. The Lord abides in the lotus of the heart.

One comes across learned scholars who have thoroughly read the *Sastras*, but who still remain ignorant of the highest wisdom. This goes to show that their hearts are still dim and obscure inspite of their vast learning. People honour them for their learning, but the light of true knowledge they cannot give, because their hearts are troubled by the tempest of *Samsara*.

On the other hand, there are illiterate people whose hearts are pure and untained. They are fit to be initiated into the secrets of true knowledge. The Lord advises such pure souls to hear the Gita, and thus acquire spiritual merit.

Question : *What is the way of Liberation for the illiterate* ?

Answer : For the illiterate, the way of Liberation is to hear the Gita.

At the end of the Gita, the Lord questioned Arjuna-"Is your delusion removed and ignorance destroyed by the message of the Gita ?"

72. कच्चिदेतच्छ्रुतं पार्थ त्वयैकाग्रेण चेतसा ।
कच्चिदज्ञानसंमोहः प्रनष्टस्ते धनञ्जय ॥ ७२

Kacchid etacchrutam partha tvayai'kagrena chetasa ।
kacchid ajnanasammohah pranashtas te dhanamjaya ॥ 72

Meaning : पार्थ *Partha :* O Arjuna, एतत् *etat :* this, त्वया *tvaya :* by you, एकाग्रेन चेतसा *ekagrena chetasa :* with one-pointed mind, श्रुतं कच्चित् *sritam kacchit :* whether heard, धनञ्जय *dhanamjaya :* O Arjuna, ते *te :* your, अज्ञान सम्मोहः *ajnana-sammohah :* the delusion of ignorance, प्रनष्टः कच्चित् *pranashtah kacchit :* whether destroyed.

Substance: Has this been heard by you O Partha, with a concentrated mind? Has the delusion of your ignorance been destroyed O Arjuna?

Commentary : As a physician who at the end of his treatment asks the sick man if his illness is cured, so also the Lord questions Arjuna whether His teaching has removed the delusion of ignorance. Ignorance of one's own real nature is the disease from which all mankind suffer. Ignorance creates delusion, and man forgets his real nature. The wise man who knows his real nature, who feels that he is not the body, but the glorious *Atma,* frees himself from all suffering and sorrow.

Ekagrena chetasa : (One-pointed mind)-Concentration is essential in every type of work. A divided and distracted mind cannot achieve anything good and useful. The mind acquires power by concentration. If the waters of a lake are disturbed, there cannot be a clear reflection of the surrounding trees. A mirror cannot reflect a moving face correctly and clearly. So also, if the mind is unsteady and disturbed, there cannot be a clear reflection of the Reality (*Atma*). Therefore the Lord questions Arjuna whether he has heard the Gita-teaching with a concentrated mind. One should study the Gita with a concentrated mind. Only then can he understand its meaning clearly. This is no doubt an elementary principle in the study and under-

standing of any subject. More so, in the study of the Gita which contains the highest spiritual truth. The student has to be extremely alert and concentrated in mind.

Ajnana sammohah : (The delusion of ignorance)-Delusion is the effect of ignorance. A man sees a rope and mistakes it for a snake. This is delusion. Here delusion clouded Arjuna's mind as he saw his relations and friends who stood opposed to him on the battle field. The Lord's teaching cleared the delusion.

Pranashtah : A potent medicine destroys the illness completely, leaving no trace of it in the body. So also knowledge destroys ignorance completely. The spiritual teacher takes great care of his disciple, and will not be easily satisfied till he has grasped his teaching. He will not be contented till his disciple is completely freed from the last trace of ignorance and bondage. Such is the compassion that great masters have for suffering humanity.

Dhanamjaya : Formerly Arjuna has acquired wealth and fame by his heroism and victory over innumerable external enemies. Now the time has come for him to vanquish the inner enemies of delusion and ignorance. This indeed is a far more difficult task. But Arjuna has all the necessary equipment, and the guidance of Sri Krishna Himself on the way to spiritual illumination.

Question *How should Gita be studied ?*

Answer : It should be heard or studied with one-pointed mind.

Arjuna answers the Lord's questions.

अर्जुन उवाच

73. नष्टो मोहः स्मृतिर्लब्धा त्वत्प्रसादान्मयाऽच्युत ।
स्थितोऽस्मि गतसन्देहः करिष्ये वचनं तव ॥ ७३

Arjuna uvacha

Nashto mohah smritir labdha tvatprasadan maya'chyuta ।
sthito'smi gatasamdehah karishye vachanam tava ॥ 37

अर्जुन उवाच *Arjun uvacha :* Arjuna Said.

Meaning : अच्युत *actyuta :* O Krishna, त्वत् प्रसादात् *tvat-prasadat :* by your grace, मोहः *mohah :* delusion, नष्टः *nashtah :* is destroyed, मया *maya :* by me, स्मृतिः *smritih :* memory, लब्धा *labdha :* is gained, गतसन्देहः *gatasamdehah :* free from doubt, स्थितः अस्मि *sthitah asmi :* firm I am, तव *tava :* your, वचनम् *vachanam :* word, करिष्ये *karishye :* I will do.

Substance : Arjuna said : My delusion is destroyed I have regained my memory through your grace, 'O Krishna! I stand firm, free from doubt; I will act according to your word.

Commentary : With heart swelling with joy and happiness, Arjuna says that his delusion is destroyed by the teaching of the Lord. When Arjuna arrived on the battle-field, his mind was distracted by a hundred doubts. He could not decide what to do and how to act. He was perplexed and confused. Delusion dimmed his intellect. After hearing the Lord's message, his delusion was destroyed. The Lord's medicine cured Arjuna's disease instantaneously. The Lord Himself is the Master and a devotee like Arjuna is the disciple. No wonder that Arjuna directly perceived the Truth, and his heart was illumined with knowledge.

Spiritual knowledge is to be tested by personal experience. It is not mere talk. Arjuna felt the force and power of the Lord's teaching. He felt a glow of the heart arising from true knowledge. Arjuna stands as a representative of common humanity. The Gita message which destroyed Arjuna's ignorance and delusion is an unfailing cure for destroying the ignorance of every individual and helping him to realise the highest spiritual truth.

Smritirlabdha : After hearing the Lord's teaching, Arjuna regained the memory of his true Self which he had forgotten under the shadow of temporary delusion The delusion being removed, he remembered his real nature. He realised in a flash that he was neither the body nor the mind, but the ever pure and ever perfect *Atma*. *Atma* is the ever present Reality in every being. The man who is conscious of this truth is a *Jnani*, and the man who forgets it is an *Ajnani*. That is all the difference. But one's being conscious or not conscious of the Reality does not make any difference at all for the ever present *Atma*. It is there all the time, during all the states and conditions which overshadow man's life from time to time. If a man who wears a chain round his neck forgets it and goes about searching for it everywhere, and at last discovers that it is all along with him, he is not said to have gained anything at all. His memory is revived, and he finds the chain where it was throughout his external search for it. So also, having forgotten the truth that he is *Atma*, man goes through all the troubles and sorrows of life, and at last he comes to know that what he thought to have lost was always there with him, and he is That (*Atma*). Such is the experience of Arjuna in the present situation. Sankara says :—

Atmatu satatam propto

hyapraptavad avidyaya

tannase praptavad bhati

svakanthabharanam yatha (*Atmabodha*)

The meaning of this verse is explained earlier in this paragraph.

Tvat prasadat (by your grace)–God and Guru are essential factors in Self-realisation. It is by the grace of God and *Guru* that the seeker realises the truth. Without such grace, no amount of individual effort can remove the darkness of ignorance and delusion. The Hindu religion has therefore prescribed regular worship of God in various ways and also the service of the *Guru* in every possible way. By the grace of God and *Guru*, the bonds of *Maya* are broken and the seeker attains freedom. Arjuna here declares this ancient truth. By the grace of the Lord, Arjuna threw off the shackles of delusion and realised his original nature.

Achyuta : The word means one who does not fall from his original state. This address of the Lord is very appropriate in this context. The Lord remains ever pure and ever perfect, and so He alone can lift man from the dark pit of *Samsara*.

Gatasandehah : (Free from doubt)—In the state of ignorance, man is beset with innumerable doubts. When Self is realised all doubts and delusions are finally removed. They do not appear again in any form whatsoever.

Karishye vachanam tava : (I will act according to your word)—Thus says Arjuna after hearing the message of the Lord. His doubts are removed. He realises that he is no other than the ever-pure and ever-perfect *Atma*. The wrong notion that he is the body is removed by true knowledge. So he says that he would act according to the will of the Lord, free from all doubt and the bondage of ignorance.

The seeker should always remember that the Master's word is final in all matters. He must have such faith in the Master even after Self-realisation. The conduct of Arjuna throughout is a perfect example of the disciple's attitude towards his Master.

Question : *How did the Gita message benefit Arjuna ?*

Answer : His delusion was destroyed. He recovered memory of his original state as Atma.

Question : *How can man overcome the delusion caused by ignorance ?*

Answer : By worshipping God and serving wise Masters, man can overcome all difficulties on the spiritual path.

In the five following verses, Sanjaya describes his joy when he heard the dialogue between Krishna and Arjuna.

संजय उवाच

74 इत्यहं वासुदेवस्य पार्थस्य च महात्मनः ।
संवादमिममश्रौषमद्भुतं रोमहर्षणम् ॥ ७४

Sanjaya uvacha

Ity aham vasudevasya parthasya cha mahatmanah ।
samvadam imam ashrausham adbhutam romaharshanam 74

सञ्जयउवाच *Sanjaya Uvacha* : Sanjaya said.

Meaning : इति *iti* : thus, अहम् *aham* : I, वासुदेवस्य *Vasu-devasya* : of Krishna, महात्मनः *mahatmanah* : high-souled, पार्थस्य च *Parthasya cha* : and of Arjuna, इमं *imam* : this, अद्भुतम् *adbhutam* : wonderful, रोमहर्षणम् *romaharshanam* : that makes the hair stand on end, संवादम् *samvadam* : dialogue, अश्रौषं *asrausham* : (I) have heard.

Substance : Sanjaya said :- Thus have I heard this wonderful dialogue between Lord Krishna and high-souled Arjuna, causing my hair to stand on end.

Commentary : By the grace of Veda Vyasya, Sanjaya was able to hear the dialogue between Krishna and Arjuna. He now expresses his unbounded joy to Dhritarashtra.

Parthasyacha mahatmanah : Arjuna was in a state of ignorance like any other mortal. He now becomes a Mahatma after gaining *Atma-Jnana* by the message of the Gita. Everybody can become a Mahatma by sincere effort. The aim of the Gita is to raise the degraded mortal to the status of a Mahatma. The ignorant man becomes wise, the man of fear becomes a hero, and the doubter gains firm conviction, by the teaching of the Gita.

Adbhutam romaharshnam : Sanjaya was filled with a feeling of wonder and his hair stood on end when he heard the divine dialogue between Krishna and Arjuna. Just as the nectar confers longevity on mortal man, just as baser metals are transformed into gold by the touch of Sparsavedi, so also the message of the Gita frees the bound soul from delusion and ignorance, and man attains *Atma-Jnana*. Sanjaya is in a state of ecstasy. It shows that everybody when he hears the Gita will be filled with great joy like Sanjaya.

Question : *How does Sanjaya describe the dialogue between Krishna and Arjuna ?*

Answer : It is wonderful and creates ecstasy in the heart of the devotee.

75. व्यासप्रसादाच्छ्रुतवानेतद्गुह्यतमं परम् ।
योगं योगेश्वरात्कृष्णात्साक्षात्कथयतः स्वयम् ॥ ७५

Vyasaprasadacchrutavan etad guhyatamam param ।
yogam yogesvarat krishnat sakshat kathayatah svayam ॥ 75

Meaning : व्यासप्रसादात् *Vyasaprasadat :* by the grace of Vyasa, अहम् *aham :* I, गुह्यतमं *guhyatamam :* great secret, परं *param :* supreme, एतत् योगं *etat yogam :* this Yoga, स्वयम् *svayam :* Himself, कथयतः *kathayatah :* declaring, योगेश्वरात् *yogeswarat :* from the Lord of Yoga, कृष्णात् *Krishnat :* from Krishna, साक्षात् *sakshat :* directly, श्रुतवान् *sritavan :* I have heard.

Substance : Through the grace of Vyasa have I heard this supreme and most secret *Yoga* direct from Krishna, the Lord of *Yoga*, Himself declaring it.

Commentary : The *Gita-Sastra* is *Yoga*. *Yoga* means that which unites. The *Jivatman* merges into *Paramatman* by *Yoga*. So the Gita is said to be *Yoga-sastra*. It contains the supreme and most profound secret. Therefore for the seekers of truth, it is the most valuable course of study.

Yogeswarat : Krishna is the Lord of *Yoga*. One can understand with what deep faith and devotion, he should hear the message of the Gita.

Sakshat : How was Sanjaya sitting in the royal palace able to hear the dialogue taking place on the battle field of Kurukshetra ? Vyasa conferred on Sanjaya the miraculous power of seeing and hearing what was happening at a distance. It is not second-hand information reported to Sanjaya by some one

else. He heard it directly. He is communicating it as he heard it for the benefit of humanity.

Question : *What is the greatness of the Gita ?*

Answer : It contains the most profound spiritual secret. It is directly declared by the Lord Himself.

Sanjaya says that his heart is over-flowing with joy as he thinks of the dialogue between Krishna and Arjuna again and again.

76. राजन्संस्मृत्य संस्मृत्य संवादमिममद्भुतम् ।
केशवार्जुनयोः पुण्यं हृष्यामि च मुहुर्मुहुः ॥ ७६

Rajan samsmritya-samsmritya
samvadam imam adbhutam ।
kesavarjunayoh punyam
hrisyami cha muhur-muhuh ॥ 76

Meaning : राजन् *rajan :* O king, अद्भुतं *adbhutam :* wonderful, पुण्यं *punyam :* holy, केशवार्जुनयोः *Kesavarjunayoh :* between Krishna and Arjuna, इमम् संवादम् *imam samvadam :* this dialogue, संस्मृत्य संस्मृत्य *samsmritya samsmritya :* having remembered, having remembered, मुहुर्मुहुः च *muhurmuhuh cha :* and again and again, हृष्यामि *hrishyami :* I rejoice.

Substance : O king ! as I recall again and again this wonderful and holy dialogue between Krishna and Arjuna, I rejoice again and again.

Commentary : Sanjaya says that he recalled to mind the Gita-message again and again. It means that the devotee should not be satisfied with a mere reading of the text, but must think of it again and again many times in order to understand its true meaning and significance. This is called "*Manana*" in the *Sastras*. Hearing is the first stage. Thinking of what is heard repeatedly is the second stage. And the third stage is being

established in the idea firmly. It is only then that the seeker gets the full reward of his study. The reward is true joy-(*ananda*), which every man is seeking here and there in the objects of the world, but which he can attain only by true knowledge and devotion to God.

Punyam : The Gita is a holy scripture. It destroys all evil which envolops the human mind.

Muhurmuhuh : Sanjaya rejoices again and again. At the moment of Self-realisation or at the moment of union with the Supreme, man experiences a state of ecstasy. Arjuna started at first as a frail mortal with his mind clouded by sorrow. At the end, the same Arjuna becomes a very different man. He attains Self-knowledge, and plunges into righteous action without fear and sorrow. So also Sanjaya thinks of the Gita-message again and again with indescribable joy.

The *Gita-Sastra* is the cure, the only cure, which destroys all ignorance inherent in man, and sorrow resulting from ignorance.

Question : *How is the Gita described here ?*

Answer : It is holy and wonderful.

Question : *What should the seeker do after hearing it ?*

Answer : He should think of it again and again and establish himself in the knowledge revealed.

Question : *What is the fruit of such meditation on the Gita ?*

Answer : The devotee is filled with joy and experiences the bliss of Atma Jnana.

Sanjaya again says that he is overpowered with wonder as he thinks of the Universal Form of the Lord.

77. तच्च संस्मृत्य संस्मृत्य रूपमत्यद्भुतं हरेः ।
विस्मयो मे महान्राजन्हृष्यामि च पुनः पुनः ॥ ७७

Taccha samsmritya-samsmritya
rupam atyadbhutam hareh ।
vismayo me mahan rajan
hrisyami cha punah-punah ॥ 77

Meaning : राजन् *rajan* : O King, हरेः *hareh* : of Hari, अत्यद्भुतं *atyadbhutam* : most wonderful, तत् च रूपं *tat cha rupam* : and that form, संस्मृत्य संस्मृत्य *samsmritya samsmritya* : having remembered (again) having remembered, मे *me* : my, महान् *mahan* : great, विस्मयः *vismayah* : wonder, पुनः पुनः च *punah punah cha* : and again and again, हृष्यामि *hrishyami* : I rejoice.

Substance : O King ! As often as I recall that most wonderful form of the Lord, great is my astonishment, and I rejoice again and again.

Commentary : In the previous verse, Sanjaya described the joy of hearing the Lord's message. Here he expresses his astonishment when he saw the wondrous form of Krishna. "I rejoice again and again" says Sanjaya. Great is his astonishment when he remembers the Universal form of the Lord. The little small world in which man lives is forgotten for the time being, and the devotee actually sees the mighty infinite Virat form of God. When this vision appears, the devotees are filled with overflowing joy that is above all other joys which he finds in the ordinary objects of the world. In that state of ecstasy, some sing, some dance, and some are plunged in deep silence.

Question : *How is the Universal form of the Lord ?*

Answer : It is most wonderful.

Question : *How did Sanjaya feel when he saw it ?*

Answer : He was filled with astonishment

Sanjaya declares that victory and prosperity are there where Krishna and Arjuna are present.

78. यत्र योगेश्वरः कृष्णो यत्र पार्थो धनुर्धरः ।
तत्र श्रीर्विजयो भूति ध्रुवा नीतिर्मतिर्मम ॥ ७८

Yatra yogeswarah krishno yatra partho dhanurdharah ।
tatra srir vijayo bhutir dhruva nitir matir mama । 78

Meaning : यत्र *yatra :* wherever, योगेश्वरः *yogeswarah :* The Lord of Yoga, कृष्णः *krishnah :* Krishna, यत्र *yatra :* wherever, धनुर्धरः *dhanurdharah :* the wielder of the bow, पार्थः *parthah :* Arjuna, तत्र *tatra:* there, श्रीः *srih :* prosperity, विजयः *vijayah :* victory, भूतिः *bhutih :* happiness, ध्रुवा *dhruva :* firm, नीतिः *nitih :* policy, मम *mama :* my, मतिः *matih :* conviction.

Substance : Wherever is Krishna, the Lord of *Yoga*, wherever is Partha, the wielder of the bow, there are prosperity victory, happiness expansion and sound policy; such is my conviction.

Commentary : This is the last verse of the Gita. All the most precious rewards of life, victory, peace and prosperity, come to the man who feels in his heart the presence of Krishna and Arjuna.

Krishna is the Lord of *Yoga*. Arjuna is the wielder of the bow, Gandiva. He is not only a hero on the battle-field of Kurukshetra, but he is also a devotee who conquered the inner enemies of delusion and ignorance. The knowledge of the Gita is like Gandiva in the hands of Arjuna. Knowledge, devotion and action are the mighty weapons in his battle with ignorance. Victory is thus assured for the true devotee.

Dhanurdharah : (the wielder of the bow) :– The word indicates the *Yoga* of action (*Karma-Yoga*). In fact Arjuna understood the secret of *Karma-yoga* by the teaching of the Gita. He plunged into action and obtained victory.

Yogeswarah : (*The Lord of Yoga*) Krishna is the embodiment of all the paths of *Yoga– Bhakti, Jnana, Karma* and *Dhyana*.

There is a common notion that wisdom and action are contradictory terms. They are not. There is no conflict between

wisdom and action. A man can live in the world surrounded by the numerous duties and obligations of life, and yet enjoy the bliss of supreme peace within himself. He is the perfect man who combines wisdom and action in his life. The Lord has already said that no man could live without action even for a moment. One sees it directly in his life. Men are acting continuously. How to achieve peace in this world of action? That is the most important question. The Gita gives a convincing answer to that question. This last verse which brings Krishna and Arjuna together into one focal point is a visible representation of *Jnana* and *Karma*, the actionless Brahman represented by Krishna, and action represented by Arjuna.

Every one wants victory, peace, and prosperity. How can he achieve them? The answer is by worshipping Krishna as the Lord of *Yoga*, and Arjuna as the wielder of the bow, that is, by knowledge and action combined in the every day conduct of life.

Sanjaya makes it clear to Dhritarashtra that victory is on the side of the Pandavas as they are following the righteous path.

The company of holy men is also most beneficial in the spiritual progress of man. May the devotees of the Gita remember this verse at all times, and thereby enjoy the highest rewards of life.

इति श्रीमन्महाभारते शतसाहस्रिकायां संहितायां वैयासिक्यां श्रीमद् भीष्मपर्वणि
श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे
श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे मोक्षसंन्यासयोगो नाम
अष्टादशोऽध्यायः ॥

Iti Sriman mahabharate satasahasrikayam samhitayam
vaiyasikyam Srimad Bhishma parvani Srimad
Bhagavadgita supanishatsu brahmavidyayam
yogasastre Sri Krishnarjuna samvade
moksha sannyasa yogo nama
astadaso'dhyayah ।

Thus in Sri Mahabharata consisting of a lakh stanzas composed by Veda Vyasa, in the section called Bhishma Parva in the Upanishads of the glorious Bhagavad Gita, in the Science of the Eternal, in the Scripture of Yoga, in the dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna, ends the Eighteenth chapter entitled–Moksha Sannyasa yoga (The Yoga of Liberation by Renunciation.)

Om tat sat

Sri Krishnarpanamastu

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